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## INTRODUCTION

In view of the celebration of the centenary of the Singh Sabha movement in the country in 1973, this issue of the *Punjab Past and Present* is being devoted to it. In order to understand the historical background of this movement and to study its impact on the life of the people, articles on the Nirankari and Kuka movements, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and its Educational Committee, the Gurdwara Reform movement and some other allied subjects have also been included in this issue. Movements such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Dev Samaj, the Chet Ramis and the Ahmadiyahs also belong to this period. Articles on these have been included in this volume as well.

Of these socio-religious movements, the Singh Sabha, the Ahmadiyahs, also known as the Qadiani or Mirzai, and the Chet Rami are the only indigenous ones, having been born in the Panjab. The Brahmo Samaj came here from Bengal. The founder of the Arya Samaj, Swami Dayananda, was born in Gujrat and has established his Samaj at first in Bombay. Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri, renamed *Dev Guru Bhagwan* and *Dev Atma*, belonged to Uttar Pradesh. The state boundaries within a country, however, can seldom hold back the growth, development and spread of ideas. No wonder these movement soon acquired all-India character.

“Religion there is but one, the religion of Truth, if any one were to practise it with firmness,” says Guru Nanak - *Eko Dharm drirhai sach koi*.<sup>1</sup> And the illimitable God pervades His creation all over, says he - *Balibari qudrat vassia, tera ant najae lakhia*.<sup>2</sup> The differences that appear to divide one religion from the other are all due to historical, geographical and political factors that surrounded them at the time of their birth, development and expansion, and it was these factors which determined the attitudes of the followers of one towards those of the other. These attitudes had at their bottom egoism, self-conceitedness and self-assertiveness which have in all ages, and in all countries, been responsible for hatreds, tensions, bloodshed and wars resulting in the destruction of countless human beings in the name of religion. This irreligionism is the worst of crimes against God, religion and humanity.

Religion is not mere profession of some creed or observance of certain rites and rituals or adoption of some signs and symbols. Religion is the way of life of honest and truthful living with the service of humanity as the basic principle of conduct. The signs and symbols are aids to the maintenance of religious discipline. A religion appeals to people to the extent that its votaries live up to its teachings and are of service to their fellow beings without distinction of clime or creed. Of this we have the living example in Christians. They came from the far-off corner of Western Europe-from Spain and Portugal-to the coasts and interior of southern India, and, in due course of time, won with love and sympathy, thousands of suppressed and depressed people for Christianity from the homeland of the Brahmans who proclaimed the theory of *Eko Brahma dvitiya nāstee*-there is but one Creator and no other-while in actual practice they treated some classes of people as unapproachable and untouchable. This sort of hypocrisy has been responsible for distinctions and hatred between man and man in India and for the spiritual and social weakness, and political downfall of her people.

With the integrity of faith and practice, the followers of the great Prophet Muhammad could carry the message of Islam from Arabia to the land's end in Europe within eighty years of his death.

It was with sincere faith in the teachings of the Gurus and with unflinching spirit of service towards their countrymen that the Sikhs could face the tyranny of the Mughal emperors for over forty years and at last emerged triumphant as liberators of the Punjab. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, 1710, Emperor Bahadur Shah ordered through a royal edict the wholesale extermination of the Sikh people as rebels against the Mughal Government. But, in spite of it, the Sikhs did not relax their struggle for the emancipation of the people of the Punjab from the galling yoke of Mughal tyranny. To them the Muslims were as much the people of the country as the Sikhs and Hindus and deserved to be liberated from the oppression of the local rulers. The local Muslims also knew that the Sikhs' was purely a political struggle. Within four and a half months of the issue of the Imperial edict for a general massacre of the Sikhs wherever found, as many as five thousand Muslims joined the Sikhs against the Mughal imperialists with fullest freedom for Muslim prayer and sermons in the Sikh army (*Akbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, April 28, 1711). This is self explanatory. In fact, there have always been happiest of relations between the Muslims and the Sikhs ever since the birth of Sikhism in the fifteenth century. The minor political differences at times-and they were very rare-may be ignored, as differences in the field of politics are at times seen even among the people belonging to the same religion.

The greatest contribution of these movements was in kindling among the people a spirit of quest in religious thought and an enthusiasm for social reform. The lead was taken by Christians who soon directed their activities from big cities to small towns and villages where their services, they felt, were needed the most for the amelioration of the condition of the depressed classes who had not only been neglected but suppressed by the Brahmanical Hindus. This won them proselytes from among the so-called low caste Chuhars and Chamars, many of whom, with improved economic condition, soon rose to better social status. The credit for the establishment of most of the homes for lepers, the crippled and the handicapped also goes to the Christian missionaries whose spirit for selfless service to suffering humanity can hardly be excelled. The Arya Samaj, the Dev Samaj and the Singh Sabhas-particularly the Chief Khalsa Diwan and its Sikh Educational Committee-have done commendable work in the field of education for boys and girls and in raising social and political consciousness in the country.

## II

The Sikhs had to begin their work under the most inauspicious circumstances. It was only a little over two decades that they had lost their kingdom. Some of the Sikh Sardars and men of influence were still locked up in jails, licking their unhealed wounds. The jagirs and lands of many families had been confiscated with their younger generations living in helpless poverty, dreaming of the glorious past that was once theirs. And who on earth would not wish and struggle for its return? The British, officials, therefore, looked with suspicion upon every effort on the part of the Sikhs at organizing their community and creating an awakening even for religious and social reform. The Kuka movement was purely religious in its aims and objects but the officials had smelt a rat in it and had suppressed it in a ruthless manner. They blew away from the guns as many as sixty-five Kukas without any formal trial and without proving any charges against them. These were also the days when Maharaja Duleep Singh, the deposed and exiled sovereign of the Panjab, was struggling in England for justice through a formal trial of his claims by the Law Lords there. Failing to receive any satisfaction from the British Government, the Maharaja left England, went to Russia and transferred his loyalty to the Czar in the hope of marching upon India with Russian help. Nothing came out of it however, and the Maharaja returned to France where he died in Paris on October 22, 1893. The chief agent of the Maharaja Duleep Singh in India during his struggle against the British Government in the eighteen eighties was the well known Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia of Raja

Sansi, the originator of the Singh Sabha at Amritsar in 1873. It was he who had gone to England to brief the Maharaja on religious and political matters and was responsible for his public renunciation of Christianity and return to the faith of his ancestors. It was he who had provided the Maharaja with important documentary evidence in support of the Maharaja's claims to his private ancestral estates in the Panjab and had used his influence to win the sympathies of the Sikhs in his favour. The Maharaja on his part had nominated Sardar Thakur Singh as his would-be prime minister. In the light of this all, the British Government naturally looked upon the Singh Sabha movement and its leaders with suspicion. It is true that some of the leaders of the movement had declared their dissociation with the Maharaja and had occasionally expressed their loyalty to the British Government. But the shrewd British officials could not take them at their word. They suspected their organizations and institutions and called them dangerous in their occasional secret reports.

The Sikhs thus were in a very unenviable position. They were between the devil and the deep sea. They had on the one hand to guard against the suspicious and repression of the government and on the other to protect their community from being absorbed in the great Hindu majority. They had been the last independent power in the country not long ago and the whole of India-Hindu and Muslim-had helped the British crush it for the extension and expansion of the British Empire. With these people still lying in their laps, the Sikhs could not successfully organize themselves in the field of politics. They were also economically backward when compared with the vast majority of the Hindus. Afraid to be victimized as political aspirants or as sympathizers of the Kukas or of Maharaja Duleep Singh, some of them had gradually slunk back into the Hindu fold, and, far want of education and religious inspiration, they were being slowly lost to the Sikh community. With this, their existence as a separate people with a distinct identity was greatly endangered. The Sikh fears on this account were further aggravated by the anti-Sikh activities of the Arya Samaj through press and platform. The first imperative need of the Sikh community at this time, therefore was to educate and enlighten its masses in matters religious and social. Thus alone could they save it from the rot that had set in and maintain its identity. The leaders of the Singh Sabha movement, therefore, wisely decided to devote their undivided attention to the spread of education among their masses with the help and co-operation of the Government, if possible. This was not only in keeping with the spirit of the times but also in line with the policy and programmes of the other communities-the Hindus of the Arya Samajist persuasion and Muslims of the Aligarh school of thought. The Christians, the Brahmos and the Dev Samajists were also then following the path of loyalty to and co-operation with the Government. As we find in the Rev. Dr. C.H. Loehlin's article on *The History of Christianity in the Panjab*, most of the Christian Missionaries working in the country and their social-welfare funds were drawn from non-British countries, and as such they had as well to follow the policy of co-operation.

The Sikhs, as mentioned above, were an economically backward community living mostly in backward rural areas. Therefore, for them to ask for government aid for their schools or to request the Government to open primary schools in the villages was in no way humiliating for them. The spread of education was the primary duty of the government. The funds for it came from the revenues of the province towards which the Sikhs contributed a substantial share. It was only a small fraction of it that was to be spent on the primary schools in the villages where Hindu and Muslims also lived along with the Sikhs. The Sikhs, as such, were serving a common cause by asking for a small share from the public exchequer. It was no special favour for the Sikhs alone.

The association of some European officials with Sikh educational programme in its initial stages was a constructive step taken by the leaders of the Singh Sabha movement for obvious

reasons, and it proved to be doubly useful to the community. It not only secured for their first and premier institution-the Khalsa College, Amritsar-the sympathy and goodwill of the provincial department of Education but also placed at its service the experience of trained specialists who built it up into a top-ranking college aiming to be raised to a University. And who can forget and ignore the commendable work done for it by Mr. G.A. Wathen and others like him? And for this the pioneers of the Singh Sabha movement and the leaders of the Chief Khalsa Diwan deserve the highest praise. It is unfair to judge them by the changed ideas and standards of the second half of the twentieth century by projecting them back into the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century. Objective history requires persons and events to be seen in the atmosphere and circumstances of their own times.

### III

Baba Ram Singh, the leader of the Namdhari movement, is one of the most misunderstood and misrepresented of the socio-religious leaders. His was a purely religious movement aiming at the revival of the Sikh faith which, he felt, was fast declining not only among the masses but also among the custodians and managers of the Sikh shrines. Brahmanism had reasserted itself with the rise of the Dogras and Brahmans at the Sikh court during the last days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. With them had once again come the worship of stones and stocks, idols and tombs. With the inspiration received from Bhai Balak Singh of Hazro, Bhai Ram Singh, as he was originally called, preached the faith of Gurus Nanak-Gobind Singh and brought back large numbers of lukewarm people to the Sikh faith with rejuvenated enthusiasm. With the zeal of new converts, thousands of people gathered round him and attended his congregations both at his village and at the fairs and religious centres visited by him. The reports of the Kuka gatherings at different places alerted the government officials and they closely watched the activities of Bhai Ram Singh. But nothing objectionable, much less political, was found against him and he was time and again declared innocent. In spite of it, some of the British officials felt nervous over the behaviour of some of the Kukas who, in a state of frenzy, at times took the law into their own hands and demolished and desecrated Hindu and Muslim places of worship and led murderous attacks on butchers. But this could, at worst, be called social crimes born of misdirected zeal for the protection of cows under the age-old Brahmanical prejudices. There was nothing political or rebellious in it. There is nothing on record to say that Bhai Ram Singh ever encouraged or incited the Kukas against the butchers. In fact, when a group of them decided on January 13, 1872, to march against the butchers of Maler-Kotla, Bhai Ram Singh not only told them to quietly disperse to their villages but, on their stubborn refusal to obey his wishes, also sent, in all earnestness, a message to the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, through one of his trusted confidants, Lakha Singh, for the *Sarkar* to make their own arrangements to meet the refractories who had gone out of his control. At no stage had the great Kuka leader said or done anything by word or deed to encourage or connive at any crime. He had no political aims and mission and preached no rebellious ideas. He had uttered not a word against the British Government in India and had used not a harsh word against any British officer. Whenever he was either visited by any official or was summoned to his presence, he offered his fullest co-operation. He was a man true to his word and honest in his action. He knew no duplicity and practised no hypocrisy. To hold such a noble and innocent soul responsible for the unlawful activities of a group of his followers and to declare him dangerous to the peace of the country and to exile him away, along with some of his well-meaning lieutenants, to spend the rest of his life in a foreign land, was the height of injustice and tyranny. The Government of India, however, soon discovered that the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, Mr. L. Cowan, and the Commissioner of the Ambala Division, Mr. T. Douglas Forsyth, who were ultimately removed from their respective

posts, had mishandled the Kuka situation, had exceeded their powers and had unjustifiably blown sixty-five Kukas from the guns on January 17-18, 1872.

For fifty years the Kuka headquarters at Bhaini were under strict police surveillance and the police-post established there for the purpose -was removed only in 1922 when Namdhari *Sants*, as they then called themselves, were allying themselves with the Udasi *Sadhus* against the Akalis during the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The Namdhari movement, which under the fostering care of its founders, aimed at restoring the Sikh faith to its purity of the days of Guru Gobind Singh, has with the passage of time drifted back into some of the Hindu practices and rituals like untouchability, *havana*, etc.

The History of the movement, though only a century and a quarter old, has suffered a great deal at the hands of some of the Kuka poets and imaginative writers like Sant Nidhan Singh Alim, Sant Indar Singh Chakkarvarti, etc., who have surreptitiously introduced such spurious matter into the life of Baba Ram Singh through the columns of the Kuka Weekly, the *Satjug*, and their own works as has reduced it to a mystery unacceptable to objective students. As the fables and stories, and things like non-violence, non-co-operation, etc., which actually belong to the twenties of the twentieth century and have been projected back by them into the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century, can not stand the test of historical scrutiny by students and scholars of history, the authenticity of some of the genuine facts also comes to be doubted. Thus a great disservice, not unoften, comes to be done, unwittingly or otherwise, to history by writers not conversant with historical methodology and discipline.

#### IV

The Arya Samaj did commendable work in the field of education, the spread of the ancient Vedic ideas and in the eradication of many unhealthy practices that had crept into the Hindu society. But the technique developed and followed by it for its propaganda, by running down the teachers and teachings of other faiths and sects in the country, has been greatly responsible for communal tension and mutual suspicion and hatred among the various sections of the Indian population. To these may also be traced the political mistrust and jealousy between the two major communities in the country, the Hindus and Muslims, with very unfortunate consequences culminating in the blood-thirsty riots of 1946-47 and the division of the land of Bharat into India and Pakistan.

The seed had been sown by the publication of Swami Dayananda's *Satyarth Prakash* in Hindi in 1875. It was later revised, enlarged, and also translated into Urdu, and was published from Ajmer and Lahore in 1884 and afterwards. Its English translation by Dr. Chiranjiva Bharadwaja was published in Lahore in 1906.

Swami Dayananda has in many places used unnecessarily harsh language against other religions and their founders and followers. This naturally created a sort of bitterness against the Arya Samaj and led to tension not only among the Muslims and the Arya Samajists, resulting later on in the murders of Pandit Lekh Ram Arya (*Musafir* March 6, 1887) and Shri Swami Shradhananda (last week of December 1926), but also among the Sanatanist Hindus and the Arya Samajists on the one hand and the Sikhs and the Arya Samajists on the other.

The Sikh revivalist movement called the Singh Sabhas had come into existence in 1873 at Amritsar, two years earlier than the Arya Samaj established at Bombay in 1875. The anti-idolatry preachings of Dayananda attracted a few well-meaning Sikhs to his society, and he was invited to the



Panjab. With the ground prepared and the work done by the Sikh Gurus and their followers, the Samaj could readily grow in the Panjab, as Lala Lajpat Rai tells us in his *Dayananda-Charitra*. Bhai Jawahir Singh, Bhai Dit Singh and several other Sikhs worked zealously for the Arya Samaj and for the establishment of the D.A.V. College, Lahore, started as a school in 1886. The indiscreet and rash speeches of some of the Arya leaders like Pandit Gurudat, Lekh Ram Arya *Musafir*, Lala Murlidhar and others, with disparaging references to the Sikh Gurus, the Sikh scriptures and the Sikhs in general, in the eleventh annual session of the Lahore Arya Samaj on November 25, 1888, however, left them with the only alternative to break off with the Samaj. The pamphleteering campaign and the press propaganda launched by some of the Arya Samaj enthusiasts further widened the gulf which it has not been possible to bridge owing to the continued tension on one issue or the other. For a detailed study of this topic, the inquisitive readers are referred to the *Civil and Military Gazette*, December, 8; the *Koh-i-Noor*, December 5, 6, 11, 12; the *Dharam Jivan*, December 9; the *Aftab-i-Panjab*, December 17; the *Khair-kehwaab-i-Kashmir*, December 9, 1888; the *Nanak Prakash*, January 15, 31, 1889; the *Journal of Indian History*, April, 1961; the *Panjab Past and Present* Vol. VI-II, October 1972, pp. 5-9, etc., etc.

GANDA SINGH

Footnotes:

1. eyko Drm idRVY scu koeI[(bsMq m. 1, AStpdI 3, AMk 1188)
2. bilhwrI kudriq visAw qyrw AMqu nw jweI liKAw[ (AwsW m. 1, vwr slokW nwl, 12-2)



## UNITY OF GOD-ONENESS OF MANKIND

*There is but one God, who is All-Truth, the Creator, Without Fear and Enmity, Immortal, Unborn, Self-Existent, Great and Bountiful.*

— Guru Nanak, Japuji

*The Hindu Kartā (Creator) and the Muslim Karīm (Bountiful God),  
and the Merciful Nourisher, are the same.*

*Have no doubt about it.*

*Allāh and Abbekh are the same;*

*The Purānas and the Qurān are the same;*

*They are all alike; It is the One God who created them all.*

*The Hindu temple and Muslim mosque are the same;*

*The Hindu worship and Muslim prayer are the same.*

*Men are All one—they only live under different influences.*

*Some are shaven Sannyāsi, some Yogi;*

*Some are known as Brahmachāri, some as Yati;*

*Some are Hindu, some are Muslim-Rāfīzis and I māmsāfis.*

*Recognize the entire Mankind as One.*

— Guru Gobind Singh, *Akal Ustat*, 85-6

*The Easterners, the people of Hinglaj and of the Himalayas,  
the Ghauris and Gardezis, sing Thy praises;  
so do the Yogis and Pavanahāris, and the Arabs of Arabia.*

*The Farabis of Farab, the Qandaharis and Qureishis,  
and the Westerners realise their duty towards Him,  
and also the Marathas, Maghels, Dravidians and Telangas.*

*The Bengalis of the Bang-desh, the Franks of Europe;  
the people of Delhi, the Rubila of Rub, the Maghelas,  
the Bangashi, Bundelas,  
the Gurkhas, the Chinese and the Tibetans,  
Whosoever meditated on Thee, received glory from Thee, O Lord.  
and prosperity in all fields.*

— *Ibid.*, 254-55

## DIFFERENT PATHS

All Creatures endowed with speech,  
Speak of Thee according to their Understanding.  
Thou dwellest apart from everything;  
The Hindu scriptures and the Muslim learned men know this secret.

According to their different understandings,  
Men give different descriptions of Thee, O God.  
But they cannot conceive Thine Extension.

— Guru Gobind Singh, *Chaupaei*, 14, 17

Whoever became intelligent in the world,  
    he set up his own sect.  
None realized the Almighty Lord,  
    rather he increased enmity, contention and egotism.

Those who obtained a little spiritual power,  
    they struck out their own paths, and  
without recognizing the Supreme Lord,  
    they became enamoured of *T'* and *Mine*'.

— Ibid., *Bachittar Natak*, 14-16

**THE NIRANKARIS**  
**DR. MAN SINGH NIRANKARI**

In the *Sikh Review* of February, 1972, Professor Harbans Singh writing on the occasion of Singh Sabha Anniversary observes that the rot which had set in had been registered long before the Singh Sabha came into being, “Baba Dayal, a saintly man, a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had cavilled at the shortcomings of the mighty and assailed the rites and observances undermining the Sikh faith. His main target was the worship of images against which he preached vigorously. He re-emphasized the Sikh belief in *Nirankar* the Formless one.” From this the movement he had started came to be known as the Nirankari Movement.

“For the early Christian Missionaries, it was an interesting development.” As a report says, “Sometime in the summer, we heard of a movement among the Hindus of Rawalpindi, which, from the representation we received, seem to indicate the state of mind favourable to the reception of truth. It was deemed expedient to visit them to ascertain the true nature of the movement, and, if possible, to give it a proper direction. On investigation, however, it was found that the whole movement was the result of the efforts of an individual to establish a new *Panth* (religious sect) of which he should be the instructor and guide. The sect has been in existence eight or nine years, but during the Sikh reign, fear kept them quiet; since the extension of the company’s Government over the country, they have become more bold, and with the assistance of our religious become more bold, and with the assistance of our religious publications to furnish them with arguments against idolatry they have attacked the faith of the Hindus most fiercely. They professedly reject idolatry and all reverence and respect for whatever is held sacred by Sikhs or Hindus, except Nanak and his *Granth*. The Hindus complain that they even give abuse to the cow. This climax of impiety could not be endured; it was followed by some street disturbances, which brought the parties into the Civil Court. . . . they are called Nirankaris, from their belief in God, as a spirit without bodily form. The next great fundamental principle of their religion is, that salvation is to be obtained by meditation on God. They regard Nanak as their saviour, in as much as he taught them the way of salvation. Of their peculiar practices only two things are learnt. First, they assemble every morning for worship, which consist of bowing the head to the ground before the *Granth*, making offerings, and in hearing the *Granth* read by one of their members, and explain also if their leader be present. Secondly, they do not burn their dead because that would assimilate them to the Hindus; nor bury them, because that would make them too much like Christians and Musalmans, but throw them into the river.”<sup>1</sup>

The Founder of Nirankari Movement, Baba Dayal, was born at Peshawar in 1783. The political situation in the country was in turmoil and hordes of invaders frequently pillaged the Punjab and Delhi. His father Ram Sahai Malhotra (*Khairi*) migrated from Kabul due to uncertain political situation. He started banking and exchange of Indian and Afghan money. His forefathers Devi Sahai and Guru Sahai belonged to Sikh *Sangat* of Kabul and visited Anandpur once or twice to pay homage to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Baba Dayal’s mother Ladiki belonged to an illustrious Sikh family. Her father Bhai Vasakha Singh was son of Bhai Bhagwan Singh who worked as Treasurer to Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur. Thus Baba Dayal was brought up according to strict Sikh traditions from his very child-hood. His mother used to take him to Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh at Peshawar every morning. He got his early education at the *Maktab* there and learnt Persian. Punjabi was taught to him by his mother. Dayal lost his father at his very tender age and even his mother left him when he was hardly 18 years of age. His mother at her deathbed enjoined on to study *Gurbani*

and mould his life according to the teachings of the *Granth*. Dayal recited *Gurbani* from the *Granth* at Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh and with deep reverence he used to wave *Chaur* over *Guru Granth Sahib*. One day, while doing this, he went into deep meditation (*samadhi*), and he heard a clarinet call "Give up this ritualistic practice. You have been commissioned to expel darkness of ignorance, superstitions and falsehood from the minds of the people; illuminate their path by the true spiritual knowledge, propagate meditation of Nam-Nirankar. You are a true Nirankari as you are a believer of God as a spirit without bodily form." Since then, he began preaching against superstitions and practice of idolatry.

His maternal uncle Bhai Milkha Singh whose ancestral home was at Rohtas, District Jehlam, persuaded Dayal ji settle down at Rawalpindi where he would find a wider field for the propagation of his mission. Dayal-ji-shifted from Peshawar and started a grocer's shop to earn his livelihood. In March 1808 (Chet) he went to Bhera, then a flourishing business centre, where he met one saint Budhu Shah, a Sewapanthi. He had religious discourses and discussions. One day, Bhai Charan Dass Kapur and his wife visited the saint when the discussion was going on and they liked his exposition of *Gurbani*. They offered the hand of their daughter to him and Dayal-Ji accepted it on the condition that the marriage should be performed within a few days as it was not possible for him to come back again. It was the month of Chet which, according to Brahmanical cult, is inauspicious and hence no marriage could be performed. They searched for a Pandit but no one would agree to perform the ceremony. Baba Dayal hit upon a new idea. He told Sant Budhu Shah to persuade Bhai Charan Dass to bring his daughter to the Gurudwara for a new and revolutionary type of marriage to which Bhai Charan Dass and his wife agreed after some hesitation. *Shabads* and *Anand Sahib* was recited and prayer was offered for the success of this *Anand* Marriage. In this way the first practical step was taken and foundation was laid for future reforms.

On his return to Rawalpindi his adversaries were astonished and perturbed as they were planning to isolate him. Had it been in their power, they would not have allowed anyone to offer his daughter for marriage to young rebel Dayal. His preaching against the worship of gods and goddesses offended them. He was also against useless and meaningless Brahmanical rituals and ceremonies.

Baba Dayal, however, soon gathered round him substantial number of ardent admirers and followers. He began to preach in the Gurudwara Peshawarian where he earnestly propagated his mission and raised congregational slogan "*Japo piano dhann Nirankar, Jo deb dhari sab kbuar-AH* Glory to the formless (Nirankar) One, god corporeal you must shun".

Two eminent leaders of Hindu orthodoxy namely Sardar Nihal Singh Chhachhi (later on knighted during Company's rule) and Dewan Toru Rai were his greatest opponents. They began to organise people to oppose him. During this period some street clashes also occurred and litigation started in the Courts. Dayal-ji was not made of ordinary stuff to be browbeaten by them. Persecution steeled his heart and he became fervently attached to his mission.

## **THE EPISODE OF BHAI DIWAN SINGH OF MANGWAL**

Mangwal was a small village in Tehsil Chakwal, where Bhai Dewan Singh, a renowned scholar and eminent preacher, lived. He was on a visit to Rawalpindi with his large retinue of camp-

followers. Wherever he went his entourage were held in high esteem and were invited to dinner (*Langar*). He was staying at Gurudwara Bara-dari where he recited *Katha* and gave exposition of *Gurbani*.

Two *balwai* brothers (*Sweetmeat makers*) were ardent admirers of Baba Dayal. After getting his consent they invited Saint Dewan Singh to dinner. The whole night was spent in preparing delicacies for the *Langar*. Next Morning, as ill luck would have it, one brother namely Suba Singh died suddenly. This tragic and untimely event upset the whole arrangement. The living brother Kaur Singh had to arrange the cremation and also *Langar* of Saint Dewan Singh. He consulted Baba Dayal who directed him to inform about this unusual situation to Saint Dewan Singh, and fix the time for *Langar*. Meanwhile preparations were to be made for the cremation of his brother's body. The Saint was informed accordingly. Dewan Singh was visibly annoyed and became furious. He angrily said to Kaur Singh, "Oh Foolish man, you do not realise the implications of the situation. According to the *Shastras*, all type of food in the dead person's house gets polluted for 13 days, but for the saints of my eminence and reputation the food remains polluted for 21 days. Go and throw the food to dogs and animals. It is not fit for our use." When Baba Dayal-ji came to know of the foolish and superstitious behaviour of Dewan Singh, he consulted Bhai Kaur Singh, helped him to get his brother cremated and asked him to bring the food as *prasad* (Sacred meal) into the Gurudwara Bhai Ram Singh in the afternoon where he was holding congregation and giving exposition of *Gurbani*. Large number of people, who were assembled there, refused to partake the 'Polluted' food. Only the ardent followers of Dayal-ji took the *prasad* without hesitation. The rest of the food was distributed amongst the Poor. Baba Dayal was least upset. On the other hand he appeared in the Gurudwara Bara-dari next morning where Bhai Dewan Singh was addressing big congregation. Recalling the previous day's incident Baba Dayal boldly addressed the *sangat* and Bhai Dewan Singh. When the couplet from Guru Nanak's *Asa di Var* was being sung by the Ragi, the hymns read thus: "*Jamna Mama Hukam He Bhane Ave Ja, Khana Peena Pavitar Hai Ditto Ne Rijak Saba, Nanak Jini Gurmukh Bujhia Tina Sutak Nah-Food and drink is a gift from God and is thus pure; those who believe in Him recognise this truth that there is no defilement of food on account of death and birth (Sutak Patak).*" He was critical of Bhai Dewan Singh's unworthy behaviour as he professed to be a saint. Bhai Dewan Singh had no reply and hung his head in shame. This was Baba Dayal-ji's second big victory over orthodoxy. The orthodox society steeped in superstitions was not prepared to give in so easily. They were furious and boy-cotted him and he was thrown out of Gurudwara Peshawarian which was got constructed at his instance. Baba Dayal's heart got steeled by this episode and he purchased a piece of land outside the city for eighty rupees on December 3, 1851 and constructed there a citadel against orthodoxy.

Baba Dayal died on 30<sup>th</sup> January, 1855. He appointed his eldest son Baba Darbara Singh to succeed him. Baba Dayal's body was entrusted to the pool of water of Laye stream with singing of hymns from *Gurbani*, and *Ardas* was recited and *Karah Prasad* and *Luchi* (pan cakes) were distributed. His death being the time of greatest fulfilment was celebrated as an occasion of rejoicing instead of mourning. This place had been selected by Baba Ji during his life as he knew that orthodox people would not allow the cremation of his body at the public cremation ground. The place thereafter came to be known as *Amritsar* (later called *Dayal Sar*).

After the death of his father, Baba Darbara Singh fervently continued the Nirankari Mission. He realised that Sikhism could only be preserved in all its purity by complete break from Brahmnical influence. The Sikhs had drifted away from the fundamental teachings of the Gurus because their

social rites and customs had all been dominated by Brahmnical interference. Meaningless rituals were being practised. The Sikhs were Sikhs only in name. The *Gurbani* was being recited like the Hindu *Mantras* without understanding. Baba Darbara Singh was determined to end all this. The changes which he wanted to effect did not imply turbulence, upheaval or disorder; rather the changes expressed the purpose of strengthening faith in and dedication and devotion to Guru Nanak's teachings. He wanted a complete break with the prevalent superstitions and meaningless rituals. His first act was to raise the banner of revolution and change. He summoned a largely attended conference of his followers and admirers to the Nirankari Darbar at Rawalpindi on Tuesday, March 13, 1855 (1<sup>st</sup> of Chet 1911 Bk.). Baba Darbara Singh called for a youngman and a young girl to offer themselves for maintaining the purity of Sikh *Dharma*. A young man named Bholi and girl Nihali offered themselves. The young couple was united in wedlock by the Anand Marriage by circumambulating the *Guru Nanak Sahib* four times with the tunes of the hymns. (*Santan Ke Karaj Ap Khaloya*). Thereafter four *Lavan* composed by Guru Ram Dass and *Shabads* were recited. The *Ardas* (prayer) was offered and holy food (*Karah Prasad*) distributed. Coins and flowers were showered over the newly wedded couple. In history, this may be said to be the first *Anand Marriage*. Baba Dayalji's marriage in 1808 was also according to Sikh rites but in present marriage, the circumambulating and *Adi Granth* was also introduced. Baba Darbara Singh got all the Sikh ceremonies from birth to death codified in a *Hukam Nama* issued by him in the year 1857. The original copy of the same is still preserved. The Sikh owe an abiding gratitude to this great leader whose clarity of thought introduced radical changes in Sikh way of life. The aforesaid occasion created much resentment against Baba-ji and his followers. He made extensive tours of the surrounding towns and villages, preached his mission and performed several marriages against determined opposition. Some of the important towns where he celebrated Anand Marriages are worth mentioning, especially Fathehganj, Tarlai Kalan, Sayyad Kasran, Kala Gujran and Jabbi. Great opposition was offered by some of the Sikhs and Hindus of these towns, and at some places he had to stay for as long as seven days to overcome their determined opposition. In April 1861, he visited Amritsar with his followers to persuade the *Granthis* and *Jathedars* of Golden Temple and Akal Takhat to grant permission to perform Anand marriage in front of the Akal Takhat. He and his disciples held several meetings with the *Granthis* and *Jathedars* for 3 days, but the permission to perform Anand marriage was refused as it was considered by them as sacrilegious. Ultimately, he could find a place in Dera Thakur Dayal Singh in Chowk Monni. First Anand marriage in Amritsar was thus performed of one Bhai Boota Singh with Bibi Karam Devi belonging to village Barnali on 17th April, 1861.

In short, Baba Darbara Singh's earnest and selfless efforts bore fruit and the teachings of the Sikh faith in all their purity shed their beneficent luster in West Punjab and then in other places. He was fearless, though humble, and he frankly exposed the hypocritical manners of the mighty, especially Sir Baba Khem Singh of Kalar and Baba Bikram Singh Bedi (Jathedar Akal Takhat). Both of them (descendants of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi) came under strong censure as they were strong supporters of the Brahmanical cult. When his ministry of 15 years, full of great achievements, came to an end in 1870 at the age of 56, he appointed his younger brother Rattan Chand (affectionately known as *Sahib Ratta-ji*) as his successor in preference to his son. Baba Ratta-ji, a saintly man, who was often seen in deep meditation, propagated the Nirankari mission with great zeal and established Nirankari centres in many towns and villages and appointed many *Biredar* (local leaders)-a practice introduced in the time of Baba Darbara Singh. *Biredars* were guides and advisers of the local *Sangats*. They used to recite the *Hukam Nama* to the *Sangats* after every fifteen days. As mentioned earlier, the British annexed the entire Sikh Kingdom in 1849 and had encouraged the Christian Missionaries

to convert people to their faith. Ranjit Singh's son Dalip Singh got converted to Christianity and a prince of Kapurthala house Sir Raja Harnam Singh also became Christian. Many persons who had adopted Sikhism for worldly gains during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh also renounced their faith. The rot had thus set in, and with the onrush of other faiths there was a great erosion and the Sikh population was dwindling.

A society was started in 1873 in Amritsar called the Singh Sabha with Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhawalia as President and Giani Gian Singh as Secretary. Their main object was to stop apostasy amongst the Sikhs and to encourage people to take *Pahul* (*Khande da Amrit*). The second Singh Sabha was established in Lahore in the year 1879, with Dewan Boota Singh and Gurmukh Singh, Assistant Professor of Oriental College Lahore, as President and Secretary, Amritsar Singh Sabha became the central organisation and other Singh Sabha's became associated with it. Its name was changed to Khalsa Diwan and its President was Baba Khem Singh Bedi. In 1886 a rift, came to the surface amongst the incumbents of the Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar. In 1875 Arya Samaj came into being and its impact was felt in the Punjab. Some educated Sikhs were also attracted to this reformist movements of Swami Dayanand, and, occasionally in the congregations of Arya Samaj, the Sikh scripture was placed on a high pedestal and *Shabads* were also recited. Later on, some narrow-minded Arya Samajists in their meetings persuaded some mis-guided Sikhs to get their beards and hair shaved off. The Sikhs could not tolerate this. All sections of the Sikhs resented this and the Sikh who Joined the Arya Samaj left it; Giani Ditt Singh and Sardar Jawahar Singh to mention a few. They visited Rawalpindi and met *Sahib* Ratta-ji, the 3rd leader of the Nirankari Movement. They sought his blessings and studied the reformed ceremonies practised by the Nirankaris. This Sikh *Maryada* (ceremonies) was adopted by the progressive Sikh leaders and introduced it in the programme of their newly organized society-the Singh Sabha. Sardar Jawahar Singh's daughter Bibi Durga's marriage with Dr. Sunder Singh Puri of Dhamial was performed in 1893 according to Anand ceremony by the Nirankari scholar and preacher Bhai Manna Singh, who was sent specially by Baba Ratta Ji from Rawalpindi. It was the first Anand marriage in Lahore on the Singh Sabha stage. Giani Lal Singh's Anand marriage at Gujranwala was also performed by Nirankari preachers. It was a happy augury that the reforms in the Sikh socio-religious ceremonies were soon picked up by the Sikh in general, and the followers of the Singh Sabha movement in particular.

During *Sahib* Ratta-ji's time, Maharaja Hira Singh, with his son Maharajkumar Ripudaman Singh of Nabha came to pay homage to the great Nirankari at Rawalpindi. They were greatly impressed by his godly, simple forthright demeanour, above all his service-oriented daily routine. *Sahib* Ratta-ji advised them about the desirability of getting legal sanction for Anand marriage. The hostility to Anand marriage was still strong and the adversaries of reforms mockingly referred to the sons and daughters born of Anand marriage wedlock as illegitimate. Against this back-drop Maharajkumar Ripudaman Singh introduced the Anand Marriage Bill in Imperial Legislature Council in 1908, and in the subsequent meeting of the Council, speaking on the Bill Sir Sunder Singh Majithia mentioned that Anand marriage was already prevalent amongst the Nirankaris. On the final reading of the Anand Marriage Bill, the Lieut. Governor of the Punjab mentioned that the greatest supporters of Maharajkumar Ripudaman Singh were the Sehjdhari Sikhs who had already adopted this ceremony for the past 30 years. This is a significant reference that could only pin-point one great personality of the time. *Sahib* Ratta-ji, who was a Sehjdhari with a large numbers of ardent Sehjdhari followers. The bill was passed into an Act in October, 1909. *Sahib* Ratta-ji was succeeded by Baba Gurdit Singh. During his time the Sikh *Maryada* was recodified after long deliberations and discussions and published in a booklet in 1915. *Sahib* Darbara Singh had anticipated it by 58 years,



codifying it from birth to death in the *Hukam Nama* issued to all the Nirankari and Biredars in 1857. A copy of it is available in the Central Sikh Reference Library at the Golden Temple, Amritsar.

*Sahib* Gurdit Singh supported the Gurdwara Reform Movement and he was a member of the S.G.P.C. before it got legal sanction. *Sahib* Gurdit Singh's son Baba Hara Singh came with a large number of Nirankari Sikhs to serve in the *Kar Sewa*, cleaning of silt, of the holy tank of Amritsar in 1922.

After the partition of India, *Sahib* Hara Singh, the 5th leader of the Nirankaris, established a centre in Chandigarh and organised the scattered Nirankaris throughout the country. He continued the preaching of the Nirankari mission on the footsteps of his great predecessors. On his demise in 1971, Dr. D.C. Pavte, the Governor of the Punjab, while laying wreath on his body, paid glowing tributes to the departed leader. Tributes were also paid by the then Chief Minister, Sardar Parkash Singh Badal, and others. *Sahib* Hara Singh's eldest son *Baba* Gurbakhsh Singh was appointed to succeed his father, and Dr. Man Singh Nirankari, an Eye Surgeon and a retired Principal of Medical College, Amritsar, was nominated by *Sahib* Hara Singh-ji in his life as an advisor and President of Nirankari *Darbar*.

The Nirankari Sikhs greet each other with words '*Dhan Nirankar*'. Their flag is tri-angular red, bordered by green and a strip of blue and yellow, fluttering from the top, each colour outlined by golden lace. The red colour represents change, happiness, blue purity and eternity, yellow, sacrifice, and green, the colour of Mother Earth.

The Nirankari Sikh Movement parallels the Brahmo Samaj of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, in fighting orthodoxy. Widow re-marriage particularly attracted its attention. *Sati* is prohibited. Smoking is forbidden for the Nirankaris. They consider the use of false weights and speaking lie as heinous crimes.

The Nirankari Sikhs are liberal in their out-look and professed to propagate the true mission of Guru Nanak. They are very conscious of being 'Nirankaris' and of what their great leaders have done for the revival of the Sikh faith. The Nirankari leaders are to Sikhism what Martin Luther was to Christianity, and Swami Dayanand to Hinduism. Their teachings in nut-shell are contained in the book called the *Hukam Nama*.

The Nirankaris insist on complete and explicit reliance on the Will of (God) *Nirankar*. They read *Gurbani* and sing *Shabad* (Hymns) on the occasions of births, marriages and deaths. They further insist on abstinence from all intoxicants. The Nirankari saint-leaders were all house-holders and worked as shop-keepers and businessmen. *Sahib* Dayal-ji and his two successors had a grocer's shop. *Sahib* Gurdit Singh ran timber business and *Baba* Hara Singh worked for sometime as a cloth dealer and had a *sarafi* shop. Honest work for sustenance is one of the tenets of the faith. Service of parents is considered obligatory. They would not consult the Brahmans or astrologers to know auspicious day or hour of marriage, business and the like.

The Nirankaris are very much opposed to the show of dowry as they maintain that it is intended for the use of the daughter and its exhibition to others is improper and useless. The Singh Sabha movement, as mentioned before, is direct outcome of the efforts of the Nirankari Movement;

yet the Nirankaris differ with the followers of the Singh Sabha in a few important points. At the time of *Ardas* (prayer), the Nirankaris do not invoke the blessing of *Bhagoti*, but use the word *Nirankar* instead of it. They believe, along with the *Guru Granth*, in the existence of a living teacher and a guide.

In the census report of November 1891, the population of the Nirankaris registered more than sixty thousands. Some writers have given the impression that the movement was confined to Western districts of Punjab. But quite a different picture emerges out from closer scrutiny of the census figures district-wise. For example, to quote from the census report, the Nirankari population, both Sehjdhari and Kesadhari, is:

1. Ludhiana district	11827
2. Ferozepur district	7676
3. Amritsar district	8703
4. Gurdaspur district	6105
5. Hissar district	1446
6. Ambala district	1268
7. Patiala district	2358
8. Kapurthala district	1958
9. Hilly States district	840
10. Delhi district	127

These figures clearly indicate that the impact of the Nirankari movement was wide in the Eastern districts of the Punjab as well.

Baba Ram Singh Namdhari, was also influenced by the teachings of *Sahib Baba Darbara Singh*, who persuaded him to introduce the Anand Marriage amongst his followers and he was partially successful. The Nirankari movement, as such, took the lead in reforms among the Sikhs and could rightly be claimed as a harbinger of Sikh renaissance.

Footnotes:

1. *Annual Report of Lodiana Mission*, Lodiana, 1853, pp. 22-23.

## THE SIKH'S STRUGGLE AGAINST STRANGULATION<sup>1</sup>

### SAINT NIHAL SINGH

The Sikh has been Great Britain's best friend ever since the Indian Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. During the dread days of the revolt, when the firmament of Hindostan was overcast with murky clouds threatening the destruction of British power in India, the scions of this soldierly race—the finest in the country and ranking high amongst the noblest martial nations of the world—bravely helped the English to weather the storm and steer the British barque out of troublous waters. Not long before this rebellion, involving the Hindu and Mahomedan forces, broke out, the Khalsa had been fighting Great Britain. But after the Punjab had been annexed, and the disciples of the Gurus had become convinced that their foreign conquerors meant well by them, the bitter foes became fast friends; and when the hour of peril came, the Sikhs saved the situation for their erstwhile enemies—a fact which all impartial records unhesitatingly affirm.

Despite the fact that, in several crucial campaigns in and out of India during the last half-century, the swarthy man from the Punjab has fought faithfully and valiantly for the British, earning the highest plaudits of the military authorities, he is not well known to the English public, or widely appreciated in the British Isles, even though he has not contributed a mite to create the political 'unrest' which has scourged India in recent years. Indeed, at a time when Hindostan has been in the public eye, and the various aspects of the existing conditions have been analysed, very little has been printed about this military race. Hence, it happens that most English people are not aware of the fact that, for the last quarter of a century, their firmest friend in India—the Sikh—has been engaged in a sturdy struggle to avoid being strangled.

## II

Almost ever since the time when the community war carved out of the Punjab polity by the hard work of the unbroken line of ten Gurus, extinction has stared it in the face, stunting its growth and menacing its corporate life. Despite the fact that the last four of the Teachers almost exclusively gave themselves up to the task of consolidating their disciples into a distinct, coherent, self-contained group, endowed with beliefs, ideas, and ideals vastly different from those prevalent in the minds of the other men and women amongst whom they dwelt, and even gave the members of their sect a distinguishing outward appearance—the double turban covering a head of unshorn hair, the untrimmed beard and moustache, the knee breeches, steel sword, and other symbols, more or less prominently displayed about the person—the Hindus have absolutely refused to recognise the separate entity of the *Khalsa*. To use the Indian hyperbolic language, the Hindus have persistently declared that the Sikhs rose on the bosom of the Hindu ocean just as a bubble rises on the surface of the sea. They expected that the bubble would subside with the rapidity that is the distinguishing feature of its kind, but so far it has not burst and merged itself with the parent waters, although its growth has been stopped—its proportions rendered smaller. But the ocean is ever hopeful, and active beneath the surface, seeking to suck in the bubble which, on its own part, is struggling to spread its dimensions—at least to maintain its separate existence.

Since the fair-skinned Aryans vanquished the dark-hued aborigines of Hindostan, and established their supremacy over the country, the Hindu never has taken up offensive weapons. His policy always has been to keep himself vigilantly, ceaselessly, on the defensive. A very exclusive being, hypersensitive about his personal dignity, proud of his systems of philosophy and religion, and of his civilization, he everlastingly has preserved an attitude of glum satisfaction which veritably

has acted as an impervious wall built around his mentality, successfully warding off all foreign encroachments. Sometimes he has found it necessary to relax and apparently surrender in favour of the enemy who was a bit too aggressive and persistent, and was steadily gaining advantage over him; but this has been an integral part of his defensive tactics, and the concession made to the advancing force has proved deceptive, and oft-times has resulted in the ultimate submergence of the victors. Early in human history the Hindus honoured the aborigines of the Peninsula by making them a substratum of their society, but up till to-day they have remained "untouchable" and degraded in mental, material, and moral life. Concessions such as this saved the Hindus from dwindling the numbers. Buddhism, at the height of its glory, was dealt with in the same manner. Buddha was admitted into the Hindu pantheon. At the time this 'favour' was bestowed upon Buddhism it was the royal religion, claiming the larger portion of India's millions. Within two or three centuries this mighty church shrivelled up and disappeared, merged into Hinduism- The same tactics were applied to Jainism-with identical results. The Mahomedans were much too aggressive to be annexed, though some effort appears to have been made in this direction, many Moslem *Pirs* being worshipped by Hindus to this day. Possibly Akbar's effort to establish *Din-i-Ilahi* may have received most of its impetus from this source. Be this as it may, the effort to absorb Islam did not succeed as well as the endeavours to assimilate Buddhism and Jainism. On the other hand, the community found itself seriously menaced by Mahomedanism. To protect itself from the proselytising of the followers of the Prophet, it barred all entrances and exits, and thus, by shutting itself within its shell rendered itself impermeable, as far as lay in its power, to Moslem influence. By sword and persuasion several millions were converted to Mahomedanism, but, taken as a whole, the Hindus were saved from becoming altogether Islamised. Indeed, their conservatism has kept their descendants, who for generations have been Moslems, from being thoroughly Mahomedanised, and to-day millions of Mussulmans observe Hindu customs, follow Hindu customary laws (instead of the *Shariat*, the religious code of the Mahomedans), and live more or less like Hindus.

Ever since the Khalsa became a separate sect, Hinduism has been trying to exert the same assimilative methods which had succeeded so well in the cases of Buddhism and Jainism. But the Sikhs, during the two or three centuries following their birth about 450 years ago, possessed the cohesion of the Mussulmans, and refused to be quietly devoured. In the early years of the nineteenth century, however, through lust for conquest and an overdose of military and administrative success, they lost most of their power of resistance, and toward the close of the last century became very much Hinduised. Although their religion condemns the caste system, and teaches that all men and women are created equal, the Sikhs to-day are split up into innumerable castes and sub-castes. Their sacred scriptures forbid idol worship, but the devotees of the Gurus to-day are far from being the monotheists that they are enjoined to be, and Hinduism actually has pushed images into the holy precincts of some of the Sikh shrines, where in apparent contradiction to the spirit of their religion, idol-worship thrives. Their Hinduisation has laid them open to such social vices as early marriage, enforced widowhood, and the inferior status of women and of female children. The net effect of this process has been to arrest the growth of Sikhism, and to render its professors unprogressive, reactionary, weak, and inert. Indeed, about two decades ago it appeared that the ocean had very nearly succeeded in churning the bubble until it was ready to burst.

### III

During the last quarter of a century the Khalsa, along with other Indian creeds and races, has commenced to awake from its slumber. Several wise, wide-awake leaders have arisen to marshal their forces against the disrupting factors. Alarmed at the dire condition of their community, they have started out on a campaign to arouse their *confreres* to a sense of their sad plight. During recent

years, as the young men have graduated from schools and colleges, they have commenced to follow the lead of the far-seeing old men. Consequently to-day a strong effort is being made to purify the body politic, and render it altogether immune from the attacks of Hinduism. In consequence, for about two decades a fierce battle has raged throughout the Province of the Punjab. All these years the Hindus have been crying themselves hoarse insisting that the Sikhs are members of their society, and they have whipped themselves into feverish activity to do all in their power to keep the Sikh leaders from inspiring a feeling of self-sufficiency in their community, which would be fatal to the ardent ambitions of the present day pan-Hindu protestant faiths. However, the Sirdars, soldier-like, have girded up their loins, accepted the challenge of the contestants, and pushed the propagandas of educating their people to a realisation of their separate entity, and urging them to evolve themselves to the highest ideals laid down for them by the Gurus, which they cannot achieve so long as they remain sunk in the prejudices engendered by Hinduism.

This task is by no means easy. To begin with, the invader cleverly conceals his secret purpose under the cloak of friendship. Indeed, the Gurus have been set up on a pedestal—they are recognised as Hindu gods. The Hindu claim is that the Sikhs came into existence for the sole purpose of protecting ‘cows and Brahmins’—or, in other words, Hindu society—from Mahomedan aggression, and from this it may be deduced that since this necessity no longer exists, there is no need for the continuance of the sect. A still more subtle attack consists of the monetary offerings of Hinduism to the Sikh priests and the lineal descendants of the Gurus. Each year Hindus from the Punjab, Sindh, and other parts of India, subscribe thousands of rupees at the Golden Temple and other Sikh shrines. They feed, clothe, and maintain in regal style men who claim to be descended from the great Teachers. The logic of lucre is luring. Consequently the influence of these subsidised people is enlisted on the side of the Hinduisation of the Khalsa. Not long ago a Sikh who claims to be a direct descendant of the Founder of the faith, presided over a large Hindu conference, and laid a great deal of stress upon the statement that the Sikhs really are Hindus—and the echo of his argument resounds from all the Sikh priestcraft. It is very hard to conquer forces such as these, especially when education is deficient amongst the masses; but some success already has been achieved in quickening the conscience of the community, and with the spread of literacy the movement is bound to expand.

The soldier Sikh’s struggle against extinction at the hands of the Hindus is so very interesting, and its issues are so vital to the well-being of the British in India—for, as is apparent on the surface, anything that enfeebles the body politic of this martial race in inverse ratio weakens *pax Britannica* in Hindostan—that one is tempted to dilate upon its many sidedness much beyond the limits imposed by the exigencies of a review. All that can be attempted, however, is briefly to indicate the main directions in which the propaganda work is being done.

#### IV

The first place in the present-day Sikh activity certainly must be given to the platform and pamphleteering work that is being carried on in order to emphasise the difference that exists between the Sikh and Hindu socio-religious ideals, and to influence the Sikhs to live up to the high standards set up by the precepts and practice of the Gurus. This propaganda proposes to purge the polity of such Hindu accretions as the caste system, the low status of women and female children, early marriage, and enforced widowhood—indeed, all the social evils to which, as a part and parcel of the Hindu community, it has been a prey. It also means that the Sikhs shall return to pure monotheism, and free themselves of the incubus of idol-worship. All this can automatically be achieved by developing the old-time consciousness of being a society by themselves, distinct from

the Hindus. The Gurus have laid down, in plain language, their ideas on all these subjects, and in allowing themselves to be seduced by the Hindus, their disciples have turned their backs upon the fundamental principles of their religion. The propagandists, therefore, are insisting that the Sikhs shall understand their separate communal entity, which also means their living up to their noblest sacred traditions. They are appealing to the texts to give emphasis to their statements.

In order to demolish the contention that Sikhs are Hindus, they quote from Guru Arjun, their Fifth Spiritual Leader:

- "Neither am I a Hindu, nor a Mahomedan."

Guru Govind Singh, the Tenth Teacher, is quoted as definitely prohibiting his disciples from following the dicta of other spiritual guides *vide*:

"Rama (the Hindu god) and Rahim (the Moslem god), Purana(s) and Koran, say many things, but we do not pin our faith to any of them."

"Simriti(s), Shashtra(s), Veda(s) and all (other scriptures talk of different things, but we do not recognise them."

The Gurus waged a great and persistent war to demolish the fabric of caste built up by Hinduism. Guru Nanak, the First Guide, exhorted:

"Do not ask what caste (he belongs to); for in the (world to) come there is no caste (distinction)."

Guru Amardas, the Third Teacher, said the same thing in almost identical words, namely:

"No one will ask to know thy caste in kingdom come, though thy deeds (which are) the real thing (will be inquired into)."

The Spiritual Leaders also set their faces against the Hindu custom of refusing the lower caste the privilege of listening to God's word. The First Teacher of Sikhism wrote:

" . . . . . the true spiritual guide is such that he gathers all into the fold."

The Fifth Guru, the most prolific writer in the line of Leaders, wrote:

"*Brahmins Kshatriyas, Vaishas and Shudras*, all the four castes, are to be given identical (spiritual) instruction."

All the Gurus made a practice of laughing at the Hindu's effort to reach heaven through taking frequent and superficial baths, building fires, and worshipping them, and other equally futile ceremonials. They pointed out that the only way to attain salvation is to cleanse the mind by meditating upon the Creator of all purity. Guru Amardas sternly told his followers:

"So long as your mind is filthy all (of you) is dirty, and cannot be cleaned by merely washing the outer man."

The Founders of the creed made a special effort to show that enforcement of widowhood was not for the good of the community in general. They particularly denounced *Sati*-the practice of *compelling* widows to bum themselves on the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands. Guru

Amardas, by propounding a very high-and sane-ideal, sought to stem the tide of this foolish custom. He pointed out:

“(We) call them *Satis* who die of being struck by the bolt of separation (from their beloved).”

All the Gurus looked upon idol-worship as the greatest of sins, which corrupted those whose imaginations could not soar higher than stone images. They, therefore, spent the greater part of their energy in breaking down all the Brahminical shibboleths, and in setting up monotheistic ideals. The very first phrase in the *Granth Sahib*-the Sikh Scriptures-is devoted to the exposition of the one-ness of God, and throughout the book one meets such declarations as the following of Guru Arjun:

“He is One, know it that God is One.”

While the Gurus persistently declared that the gods carved out of wood and stone were helpless, they laid great stress upon the omnipotence of the Supreme Being. Says Guru Amardas:

“I tell my condition to my Master, who is capable of curing pain at once.”

All the Gurus rose superior to the tendencies of the time to consider women to be beings inferior to men. They invariably insisted upon all men being looked upon as brothers, and all women as sisters, putting the mates and females on precisely the same level. They set the example by treating their feminine relations with profound respect-a pattern that was followed by their pupils. They also insisted upon dealing with their female devotees in exactly the same way as they did men, unlike the Hindu practice of acting as if the womenfolk belonged to the order of *Shudras*, and even prohibiting them from listening to the reading of the Vedic texts. The Sikh Spiritual Leaders imparted the same teaching to both sexes. They also struck the axe at the root of (the *purdah* system by banishing the veil and making the men and women attend the same gatherings, distributing (them through the audience without any sex distinction. The sum total of such a policy meant that the women were automatically given equal rights.

The Sikh women, in the later days of persecution at the hands of the fanatic Mahomedans, showed that, unlike many of their ‘modern’ sisters, they not only were anxious to obtain private and public loaves and fishes, but were eager and willing to make sacrifices and undergo hardships for the communal good. Hundreds of them gave up their lives for the sake of their faith; and thousands of them abided in the woods, sharing the trials of the men who had sought shelter in the dense Punjab jungles in order to escape being murdered by Mussulmans. These brave women, besides carrying on their household work in camps, attended as army nurses upon the wounded and dying in the field, and often even themselves gallantly fought. But the grand-daughters of these brave females have fallen to the low level of the Hindus, and the inferior status granted to them in this circumstance, early marriage, enforced widowhood, and seclusion, have woefully stunted the bodies and minds of the present generation. However, a strong propaganda is being waged to paint the beauties of the old traditions and to revive them once again.

## V

Besides platform and pamphleteering work, the Sikhs also are endeavouring to rescue the masses from the darkness of dense ignorance and superstition by setting up denominational schools and colleges to impart modern instruction plus religious training to boys and girls. They have a



college for men at Amritsar, and an academy for women at Ferozepur. Less pretentious schools are distributed all over the province. Special effort is being bestowed upon starting and maintaining institutions for the benefit of orphans and girls. Indeed, there are many Sikh leaders who attach such importance to female education that they advocate that the boy's cultural training should be left to the Government, while the work of Khalsa shall be directed toward supplementing the efforts of the administration to provide scholastic opportunities for the girls. In consonance with this spirit, small academies especially meant for female children are now dotted all over the Punjab. These institutions have an excellent prototype in the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya at Ferozepur, the best of its kind maintained by the community, and about as good as any high school for girls in the Province or in the country. The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya is the handiwork of a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Takht Singh, who entirely gave themselves up to the cause of feminine emancipation. Unfortunately, Mrs. Takht Singh suddenly died some time ago, but her husband is devoting himself to the school. He has been able, by personal effort, to collect what is considered a large sum in India, with which he has been able to build two wings of a huge structure for the purpose of holding classes and serving as a hostel for the students. With commendable zeal he is now working to collect the funds to complete the building and to provide a large endowment fund. The syllabus of study was planned by the late Mrs. Takhat Singh, who, with singular intelligence, adapted the curriculum to the exigencies of the life of the modern Indian girl, and the course, therefore, is of a nature calculated to fit the pupil to be a good housewife in addition to being a cultured companion to her husband, and a useful member of the Church as well as of society in general.

To give stimulus to educational activity, yearly the *Sikh Educational Conference* meets in some big city of the Punjab, it is largely attended by men and women, some of whom journey hundreds of miles to be present at the sessions. A very interesting feature of the sittings during the past few years has been the enthusiasm of the members of the fair sex, who have been so stirred by the speeches that they have torn off their ornaments and given them to help swell the funds for providing educational facilities for Sikh children. Since the Indian woman loves ornaments with a greater passion than even her sister of the Occident, the genuineness of the Sikh revival is very strongly marked by the self-sacrifice implied by the contributions thus offered.

#### Footnotes:

1. *Fortnightly Review*, London, January-June, 1912 (97), pp. 82-90.

## ORIGINS OF THE SINGH SABHA PROF. HARBANS SINGH<sup>1</sup>

In the history of Sikhism, the hundred years beginning from 1873 are dominated by one single motivation-mat is of search for identity and self-assertion. The entire period can be interpreted and understood in terms of this central concern. Under this impulse new powers of regeneration came into effect and Sikhism was reclaimed from a state of utter ossification and inertia. Its moral force and dynamic vitality were rediscovered. The Sikh mind was stirred by a process of liberation and it began to look upon its history and tradition with a clear, self-discerning eye. What had become effete and decrepit and what was reckoned to be against the Gurus' teachings was rejected. The purity of Sikh precept and practice was sought to be restored. Rites and customs considered consistent with the Sikh doctrine and tradition were established. For some legal sanction was secured through Government legislation. With the reform of Sikh shrines which, again, was clinched by a unique display of communal unity and fervour and by eventual legal sanction secured from the Government of the day. This period of fecundation of the spirit and of modern development also witnessed the emergence of new cultural and political aspirations. Literary and educational processes were renovated. Through a strong political platform, the Sikhs sought to secure recognition. The process reached its culmination in the recent formulations for a Punjabi-speaking State.

Concretely, the starting point was 1873 when a few far-seeing Sikhs assembled in Amritsar and formed a society with the simple, unostentatious name of Singh Sabha.

### II

An English newspaper writes that the Christian faith is making rapid progress and makes the prophecy that within the next twenty five years, one-third of the Majha area would be Christian. The Malwa will follow suit, just as we do not see any Buddhists in the country except in images, in the same fashion the Sikhs, who are now, here and there, visible in their turbans and their other religious forms like wrist-bangles and swords, will be seen only in pictures in museums. Their own sons and grandsons turning Christians and clad in coats and trousers and sporting mushroom-like caps will go to see them in the museums and say in their pidgin Punjabi: "Look, that is the picture of a Sikh-the tribe that inhabited this country once upon a time." Efforts of those who wish to resist the onslaughts of Christianity are feeble and will prove abortive like a leper without hands and feet trying to save a boy falling off a rooftop. This was a note which appeared in the *Khalsa Akhbar* of Lahore, May 25, 1894, from the pen of its editor Giani Ditt Singh.

Reporting the observance of the first anniversary of the Lahore Singh Sabha in its issue for April 22, 1905, the *Khalsa Advocate* of Amritsar referred to the occupant of a Bunga in the precincts of the Tam Taran Gurdwara who had embraced Christianity and hung a cross on a wall of it turning it thereby into a chapel.

A student by the name of Bir Singh contributed a letter to the *Khalsa Akhbar*, February 12, 1897, saying:

Near the Dukhbanjani beri tree (in the Golden temple precincts) there is a room on the front wall of which is painted a picture. The picture depicts a goddess and Guru Gobind

Singh. The goddess stands on golden sandals and she has many hands-ten or, perhaps, twenty. One of the hands is stretched out and in this she holds a *Khanda*. Guru Gobind Singh stands barefoot in front of it, with his hands folded.

A letter in the *Khalsa Akhbar*, October 8, 1897, reported:

On Tuesday, Bhadon 31 (September 14, 1897) the *Pujaris* of the Tam Taran Gurdwara held the *sharadha* ceremony in honour of Guru Arjun. Those feasted were from outside the faith and they smoked.

The *Khalsa Akhbar*, July 13, 1894, carried this letter in its correspondence columns:

In the village of Natta, in Nabha State, a Sikh married off his daughter according to *Gurmaryada*. Most of the population in the village, including Brahmanical Hindus and some Sikhs, became hostile. They did not let the marriage party stay in the *dharamsala*. The host, firm in his faith, had to put up the wedding guests in his own house.

A correspondent's letter in the *Khalsa Samachar* of Amritsar, edited by Bhai Vir Singh, dated June 25, 1902, said:

Around the village of Singhpur the Christians and the Muhammadis are becoming very influential. The former have two churches here and the latter two mosques. In this area there is no *dharamsala* and the rural Khalsa is rather neglectful of its religious duty.

These quotations from the earliest newspapers started by the Sikhs reveal the nature of the identity crisis Sikhism then faced. They refer to some of the fundamental deficiencies of Sikh society and the challenges a fast-changing environment had created. Audible here are also the intimations of the Singh Sabha awakening then moving the hearts of large numbers of Sikhs in the Punjab and outside.

An editorial in the *Khalsa Advocate*, December 15, 1904, thus summed up the situation which existed before the emergence of the Singh Sabha:

..... false gurus grew up in great abundance whose only business was to fleece their flock and pamper their own self-aggrandisement. Properly speaking, there was no Sikhism. Belief in the Gurus was gone. The idea of brotherhood in the *Panth* was discarded. The title of 'Bhai', so much honoured by Sikhs of old, fell into disuse and contempt. Sikhs grovelled in superstition and idolatry. .... It (Sikhism) had thus lost all that was good and life-giving in the faith.

From what decadent state the Singh Sabha had salvaged Sikhism will be apparent from this following single instance. Before the movement had got well under way, the powerful Singh Sabha editor Giani Dit Singh, who met the raging polemics against the Sikhs with extraordinary literary and scholarly resource and who was one of the leading lights of the reformation, had to withdraw himself from the Sikh congregation at the time of the distribution of *Karahprasad*. The reason was that he came of a so-called the low-caste family.<sup>2</sup>

The decline had started in the very heyday of Sikh power. In the country splendour of the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the Sikh way of life became subverted. The faith was weakened by the influx of large numbers of those who had adopted the Sikh form to gain worldly advantage, but whose allegiance to its principles and traditions was tentative. In the words of a character in one of Sir Jogendra Singh's novels in English: "We failed because we did not obey the Guru. People established Kingdoms and principalities and neglected their poor brethren. The result is what you see-the Khalsa has fallen." But the character is aware of the massive reformation that was taking place. He says: "Sikhism is now casting off external influences and returning to the solid rock of its own pure faith and divine teachings."<sup>3</sup>

The protest against the rot that had set in was registered long before the Singh Sabha came into being. Baba Dayal, a saintly man, contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had cavilled at the shortcomings of the mighty and assailed the rites and observances undermining the Sikh faith. His main target was the worship of images against which he preached vigorously. He re-emphasized the Sikh belief in *Nirankar*-the Formless One. From this the movement he had started came to be known as the Nirankari movement.

For early Christian missionaries it was an interesting development. As a report says:

Some time in the summer we heard of a movement among the Hindus of Rawalpindi, which, from the representations we received, seemed to indicate a state of mind favourable to the reception of Truth. It was deemed expedient to visit them, to ascertain the true nature of the movement, and, if possible, to give it a proper direction. On investigation, however, it was found that the whole movement was the result of the efforts of an individual to establish a new *panth* (religious sect) of which he should be the instructor and guide. The sect has been in existence eight or nine years, but during the Sikh reign fear kept them quiet; since the extension of the Company's Government over the country, they have become more bold, and with the assistance of our religious publications to furnish them with arguments against idolatry, they have attacked the faith of the Hindus most fiercely. They professedly reject idolatry, and all reverence and respect for whatever is held sacred by Sikhs or Hindus, except Nanak and his *Granth*. The Hindus complain that they even give abuse to the cow. This, climax of impiety could not be endured, it was followed by some street disturbances, which brought the parties into the civil courts. They are called Nirankaris, from their belief in God, as a spirit without bodily form. The next great fundamental principle of their religion is, that salvation is to be obtained by meditation of God. They regard Nanak as their saviour, in as much as he taught them the way of salvation. Of their peculiar practices only two things are learned. First, they assemble every morning for worship, which consists of bowing the head to the ground before the *Granth*, making offerings, and in hearing the *Granth* read by one of their members, and explained also if their leader be present. Secondly, they do not burn their dead, because that would assimilate them to the Hindus; nor bury them because, that would make them too much like Christians and Muslmans, but throw them into the river.<sup>4</sup>

The Nirankari and the more actively protestant Namdhari movement which followed it had but limited impact. What touched Sikhism to its very roots and made it a living force once again was the Singh Sabha reformation. Unlike other Indian reform movements of the period which were the creation of outstanding individual leaders, the Singh Sabha was a mass upsurge. There were three factors mainly responsible for it, -and awareness born of the general awakening in the

atmosphere that Sikhism as commonly practised was a corruption of what it originally was, a reaction to what was happening in the-neighbourly religious traditions and defensiveness generated by Christian proselytisation and the *odium theologicum* started by some Hindu critics.

#### IV

The challenge of Christian proselytisation came with the advent of the British. Even when Ranjit Singh, the Sikh sovereign, still reigned in Lahore, a Presbyterian minister John C. Lowrie had arrived from America in 1834 to set up a mission at Ludhiana, the north-western British outpost near the Sikh frontier. The factors for the choice of this area as “The best field of labour” were its “numerous and hardy population. . . . a better climate than the lower provinces, and . . . . a ready access to the lower ranges of the Himalaya mountains in case of the failure of health.” An additional reason was “the Sikh people to whom our attention at first was specially directed.”<sup>5</sup>

Besides preaching the Gospel, the mission ran an English school and a printing press. The school was an innovation in this part of the country—a novelty both in its composition and curriculum. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had himself wanted to have an English school established in his capital for the education of the children of his family and other promising young man. He had Lowrie visit Lahore for this purpose. The school might have materialized, but “the missionary principle of teaching the Gospel in connection with literature and science was unacceptable to the Maharaja.”<sup>6</sup>

With the abrogation of Sikh rule in 1849, the Mission extended its work to Lahore. Two of its members, C.W. Forman and John Newton were set apart for this duty and sent to the Punjab capital immediately. English and vernacular schools as well as welfare institutions like hospitals and orphanages followed. C.W. Forman turned out regularly for bazar preaching. One day, he received a challenge to a public debate with a Muslim theologian which he accepted. Six subjects were fixed for discussion and the issue joined with zeal from both sides. This event (1862) might well have been a precursor to disputations between spokesmen of different faiths which overtook Punjab at the turn of the century.

Amritsar, the headquarters of the Sikh religion, became another important seat of Church enterprise. In 1852, T.H. Fitzpatrick and Robert Clark, the first missionaries of the Church of England appointed to the Punjab, arrived in station. In the valedictory instructions given them, they had been told: “Though the Brahman religion still sways the minds of a large proportion of the population of the Punjab, and the Mohammedan of another, the dominant religion and power for the last century has been the Sikh religion, a species of pure theism, formed in the first instance by a dissenting sect from Hinduism. A few hopeful instances lead us to believe that the Sikhs may prove more accessible to scriptural truth than the Hindus and Mohammendans. . . .”<sup>7</sup>

The English missionaries were joined by Daud Singh, recorded to be the first Sikh ever to have embraced, Christianity. He had been baptized in Cawnpore by the Rev W.H. Perkins, and was transferred to Amritsar as pastor in 1852. Two mission houses were built in the city by the Deputy Commissioner. Construction of the station church was started. In the wake of the Mission came a vernacular school, a high school, a school for girls and a midwifery hospital. The evangelising work was rewarded with the conversion of men like Shamaun, i.e., Simeon, a Sikh *granthi* (reader of the Holy Book or priest), formerly Kesar Singh of Sultanwind, Imad-ud-din, a Muslim *maulavi* and Rullia Ram of a Hindu Khatri family in Amritsar who had attended the Mission School and passed the

Calcutta Entrance examination. Sub-stations of the Mission were opened in important towns of the Sikh tract of Majha such as Tarn Taran, Ajnala and Jandiala.

The United Presbyterian Mission which began its work in Sialkot in 1855 met with special success. The conversion of Ditt, “a dark, lame, little man,” of the sweeper class from Marali village was the forerunner of what has been called “the mass movement.” “In the eleventh year after Ditt’s conversion more than five hundred *chuhars* (outcaste scavengers) were received into the Church. By 1900 more than half of these lowly people in Sialkot District had been converted, and by 1915 all but a few hundred members of the caste professed the Christian faith.”<sup>8</sup>

Other societies notably the Cambridge Mission, the Baptist Mission and the Church of Scotland entered the field and the network soon covered the entire country, including the frontier areas. A catalyst had entered Punjabi life which precipitated a vital reaction.

The challenge of Western science and Christian ethics and humanitarianism provoked self-examination and reinterpretation in Indian religions. The result was a wide movement of reformation which took pronouncedly sectarian forms in the Arya Samaj fundamentalism in Hinduism and Ahmadiyah heresy in Islam. The more liberal expressions were the Brahma Sabha, later known as Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Rammohun Roy in Bengal in 1828, the Prarthana Sabha which began in Bombay in 1867 and the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1834-86). The encounter in the Punjab was marked by aggressiveness and acerbity and the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were filled with abrasive religious polemic in which the Christians, Muslims and Arya Samajists freely participated.

For Sikhism, strangely somnolent since the forfeiture of political authority, this was a critical time. Challenged by the religious and cultural forces around it, it was set on a course of self-understandings. The formalism and ceremonial which had accumulated during the days of princely power were recognized as accretions and adulterations contrary to the teachings of the Gurus. Survival was linked with the expunction of these abuses and the recovery of purity in belief and usage. Such had been the dereliction of the faith that, after occupation of the Punjab, several of the British observers prognosticated dismally for it. Some thought it was already dead; others that it awaited an inevitable doom.

In 1853, Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last Sikh ruler of the Punjab, who had come under British tutelage at the tender age of eight, accepted the Christian faith—a conversion hailed as “the first instance of the accession of an Indian Prince to the communication of the Church.”<sup>9</sup> Duleep Singh made liberal donations out of his allowance for Christian charity and the maintenance of mission schools. The Sikh Raja of Kapurthala invited the Ludhiana Mission to set up a station in his capital and provided funds for its maintenance. “Until the Rajah of Kapurthala invited missionaries to his capital, no instance had occurred in India, in which the progress of the Gospel had been fostered by a ruler.”<sup>10</sup> A few years later, the Kapurthala Raja’s nephew Kanwar Harnam Singh became a-Christian. The Gospel was preached in the neighbourhood of the Golden Temple. For this purpose one of the surrounding Bungas, or pilgrim’s had been acquired of rent.

## V

In the beginning of 1873, four Sikh pupils of the Amritsar Mission School proclaimed their intention of renouncing their faith in favour of Christianity. This shocked Sikh feeling. Added to this was a series of carping lectures in Amritsar on the Sikh faith and the narration of Guru Nanak’s

life in deliberately garbled detail by Shardha Ram Phillauri who had been engaged by the British to write a history of their faith. To consider these matters some prominent Sikhs, including Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia, Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, a descendant of Guru Nanak, and Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala, convened a meeting in Amritsar in 1873.<sup>11</sup> As a result of their deliberations, an association called Singh Sabha undertook to (i) restore Sikhism to its pristine purity; (ii) edit and publish historical and religious books; (iii) propagate current knowledge, using Punjabi as the medium, and to start magazines and newspapers in Punjabi; (iv) reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates; and (v) interest the highly placed Englishmen, in and ensure their association with, the educational programme of Sikhs.

The Singh Sabha gained quick support of the literate sections of the community and many Sikh scholars and leaders volunteered to join its ranks. A vigorous campaign was set afoot. Two of its major thrusts were the depreciation of un-Sikh customs and social evils, and the encouragement of Western education. Progressive concern was as pronounced as the revivalist impulse. Supporters of the Singh Sabha initially met with strong opposition, especially in the villages. They were scorned and ridiculed for their so-called novel ideas. An epigrammatic couplet satirizing their new-fangled enthusiasm has become part of Punjabi folklore.

When the barn is emptied of grain,  
What better can you do than turn a Singh Sabhia?

More mordant in humour was the villager's deliberate corruption of the name of the movement from Singh Sabha to, *Singh Safa*, the word "safa" signifying widespread destruction caused by the plague epidemic of 1902.<sup>12</sup>

The reformist ideology percolated to the Sikh peasantry primarily through soldiers serving in the army or those who had retired. One of the regiments had constituted a choir of reciters to go round the villages and sing the sacred hymns at Singh Sabha congregations. The movement picked up momentum and rocked the Punjab from one end to the other. Besides the religious and social reform, it brought fresh leaven to the intellectual and cultural life of the region.

"For the Sikhs the Singh Sabha was a great regenerating force. It articulated the inner urge of Sikhism for reform and gave it a decisive direction at a crucial moment of its history quickening its latent sources of energy. A comparison between the state of Sikhism before the Singh Sabha and since will reveal the extent of its moral effect. The Sikh faith had waned incredibly before the first stirrings of the movement were felt. A sense of lassitude pervaded Sikh society which had sunk back into the priest-ridden debilitating cults, antithetical to Sikh monotheism. The teaching of the Gurus had been forgotten and the Holy *Granth*, confined to the *Gurdwara* and the *dharamsala*, had become the concern only of the *Bhai* and the *Granthi*. From this Condition the Singh Sabha rescued the Sikhs, awakening in them a new awareness of their past and of the excellence of their faith. The Singh Sabha touched the very base, the mainsprings of the Sikh life and resuscitated the essential content of Sikh belief and exercise. It enhanced the intellectual capacity of the Sikhs and restored to them their creedal unity and their religious conscience. It opened for them the doors of modern progress and endowed them with the strength and adaptability to match the pressures created by new trends in man's thinking. The momentum which the Singh Sabha gave to the Sikh renaissance still continues."<sup>13</sup>



Footnotes:

1. Professor and Head of the Department of Religious; Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.
2. See *Shuddhi Pattar*, November 10, 1897.
3. Sir Jogendra Singh, *Rasili*, chapter XIII, as serialized in the 'East and West,' August 1912, pp. 793-94.
4. *Annual Report of the Lodhiana Mission*, Ludhiana, 1853, pp. 22-23.
5. John C. Lowrie, *Travels in North India*, Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842, p. 41.
6. *Historical Sketches of the Indian Missions*, Allahabad, 1886, p. 27.
7. Robert Clark, *The Missions in the Punjab and Sindh*, revised edition, Church Mission Society, 1904, p. 3.
8. J. Waskom Pickett, *The Mass Movement*, the Abingdon Press, Cincinnati, p. 45.
9. Johnston Walsh, *A Memorial of the Fatehgarh Mission*, p. 113.
10. *Annual Report of the Lodhiana Mission*, Ludhiana, 1862, p. 51.
11. See Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Lahir*, Amritsar, pp. 11-13.
12. Giani Nahar Singh, *Singh Sabha 'Gujarwal in Grewal Itibas*, 1970, pp. 114-15.
13. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, pp. 146-47.

## THE SINGH SABHA MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

### PROF. TEJA SINGH

The first attempt at reform, in the shape of the Namdhari movement, was successfully paralysed owing to the want of a common feeling among the Sikhs, which could be engendered only by education. It is a significant fact that, while all other communities at that time got the inspiration for reform from Western education, the Sikhs' first endeavours in this line were the result of their own inherent genius. They realised, however, that their attempts to rouse the whole community to feel the necessity of reform would be fruitless unless they first got themselves educated. The Government also learnt a lesson that, in their own interest, they should not antagonise the reforming element among the Sikhs; rather they should help it and, if possible, to guide it in the work of reform. Political contingency may have required that as many elements as possible should be segregated from the general body of Hindus who were responsible for the agitation for political reform in India. But it would be unjust to accuse Sir Sayyad Ahmad or his counterparts among Sikhs of *misguiding* their communities to serve the ends of the British Government in India. It was in the interest of Sikhs and Mohammendans that before they could consciously and usefully take part in the political life of India they should go through a discipline of education and religious reform. Both these communities were backward in this respect, and they were quite justified in co-operating with the Government in order to secure the much-needed help from them.

So far as the Sikhs were concerned, it was inevitable that the movement of reform among them should take the form of dehinduising them. This would have come, even if the Government had stood aside, because the only trouble with Sikhism at that time was that its doctrines and institutions had been completely Hinduised. The reformers, therefore, had a tremendous task before them to rediscover the pure doctrine and then to preach it to the ignorant masses.

#### KHALSA DIWAN OF AMRITSAR

The first association of reform, called the Singh Sabha, was founded at Amritsar in 1873, only a year after the Namdhari trouble. Its inaugural meeting was held at the Manji Sahib at 2 o'clock on the Dussehra day (October 1). It was attended by the Pujaris, Mahants, Gyanis, Granthis, Udasis, Nirmalas, besides prominent Sardars like S. Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, who was the moving spirit of the body. Its weekly meetings were held at the Manji Sahib (where even now you may find a dilapidated room bearing a sign-board of the Sabha). In the meetings lectures and discussions were held in an atmosphere of controversy and denunciation which did not allow much of spiritual content. It was perhaps necessary at that time. Gyani Sardul Singh put forward a point for discussion that the birthday of Guru Nanak should be celebrated in the month of Vaisakh instead of Kartik. The discussion went on for three years, and as a result a *Gurparnali* or calendar was prepared giving the true dates of the births and deaths of the Gurus. Another subject for discussion was the text of the *Dasam Granth* which was subjected to a close examination for the purpose of discovering how much of it was Guru Gobind Singh's own composition, and how much came from other writers. Thirty-two different versions were collected to work upon. The work growing apace, it was entrusted to a separate body, constituted under the Singh Sabha, which was called the Gurmat *Granth* Pracharak Sabha. Dr. Charan Singh (father of Bhai Vir Singh) was its secretary. The work of collecting the different texts was completed in 1896, and its report was published in 1897, embodying the results of the research and preparing a true recension of the *Dasam*

*Granth*. Inspired by these researches other works of great importance were prepared, such as Gyani Gyan Singh's *Panth Parkash* and *Twarikh Khalsa*, Pandit Tara Singh's *Guru Granth Kosh* and *Tirath Sangrah*, etc. In 1894 Bhai Kaur Singh and Bhai Vir Singh established the Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar for the purpose of issuing monthly tracts on Sikh religion. This society has done much to popularise Panjabi and the stories of Sikh history.

Besides the Singh Sabha of Amritsar, there were other centres where similar associations were being formed. The most important of such places was Lahore, where Professor Gurmukh Singh was working most zealously with the purpose of organising Sikhs and making them feel their lost individuality. Through his influence in 1877 classes were opened in the Oriental College for teaching Panjabi as the only<sup>2</sup> modern Indian language, besides the classical languages. He himself was appointed Lecturer in Panjabi, besides Bhai Harsa Singh, and later on Bhai Dit Singh, as an additional teacher. Prof. Gurmukh Singh was the greatest figure in the Singh Sabha movement. Besides being a great scholar of Sikhism, he possessed a strong personality which overawed even Rajas and Maharajas. He had a clear vision of Sikhism as conceived by the Gurus, and was determined to restore it to its original shape without any compromise with Hinduism. He had the knack of gathering about him men of sterling worth. With their help he founded a Singh Sabha at Lahore, on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1879, and got it affiliated to the Singh Sabha of Amritsar, which became the central body called the Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar. A branch Singh Sabha was also established at Amritsar to serve as a local centre. The objects of these associations were: To inculcate love for Sikhism among all those who called themselves Sikhs or Khalsas; to preach the principles of this great religion; to publish literature in aid of this religion; to publish the authentic texts of the Guru's Word and other books, such as the *Janamsakhis* and the *Gurparnalis*, after correcting and amending them; to promote the study of modern knowledge through the medium of Panjabi, and for this purpose to issue papers and magazines. Special care was taken to keep out apostates, the opponents of Sikhism, and those who had proved obnoxious to the Government. Even Europeans could become members in the educational branch. It was provided in the fundamental rules that nothing against the Government could be discussed in the Singh Sabha meetings.

These rules became the model for all the Sabhas founded in connection with this movement. Prof. Gurmukh Singh went about preaching the mission of the new order, and was able to create and get affiliated scores of Singh Sabhas in the country. This made the Amritsar Diwan very prominent, and all the influential people, even those who were conservative in their outlook, were attracted towards the centre of this movement. Baba Khem Singh Bedi, a descendant of Guru Nanak, became the president of the Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, and Prof. Gurmukh Singh its chief Secretary, with several secretaries in charge of sub-committees for religious, literary, educational and press matters. As the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple authorities were cooperating with this Diwan, the *Hukamnamas* from the *Takht* were often issued in favour of the reformers. This welcome phase, however, lasted only for a short time, because the Diwan contained many leading members whose zeal for reform was only skin-deep. They were not ready to shed off the old tradition in its entirety. They still clung to untouchability, idol worship, man-worship, etc. There began to appear cleavage between the wholehoggers, most of whom belonged to the Lahore centre, and the slow-paced reformers who belonged to the Amritsar centre. Prof. Gurmukh Singh found his position more and more difficult. He was for the removal of the disabilities of the untouchables, who had been presenting their difficulties before the Diwan, but had always been put off with one excuse or another. Things came to a head on the question of providing cushions for the seating of Baba Khem Singh, when he came to pay a visit to the Golden Temple. He claimed this as a special privilege as a descendant of the founder of Sikhism. Prof. Gurmukh Singh and others of his way of

thinking were against this practice. They wanted equal treatment for all, and did not want to allow any invidious distinction to be made in the presence of the Holy *Guru Granth Sahib*. Prof. Gurmukh Singh was forced to sever his connection with the Amritsar Diwan, and to found a new Khalsa Diwan at Lahore, to which he affiliated almost all the Singh Sabhas. The Amritsar Diwan was left only with the three Sabhas of Amritsar, Faridkot and Rawalpindi. Its president was Baba Khem Singh and Secretary his staunch disciple, Bhai Avtar Singh Vahiria. This Diwan, though truncated, still enjoyed some prestige on account of its association with the central temples and the great authority of Baba Khem Singh and certain ruling princes. It held its annual meetings as usual on the Diwali and Vaisakhi occasions. Maharaja Bikram Singh of Faridkot gave Rs. 75,000 for erecting the building of the Free Kitchen attached to the Golden Temple. He also spent Rs. 25,000 on the electrification of the sacred premises. To counteract the so-called innovations introduced by the extreme reformers like Bhai Gurmukh Singh a Hinduised commentary of the Holy *Guru Granth Sahib* was prepared by Gyani Badan Singh and published at the expense of the Faridkot Durbar. A stream of books and pamphlets issued from the prolific pen of Bhai Avtar Singh Vahiria and others to meet the ever advancing tide of reform-literature as produced by Bhai Dit Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh. Bhai Avtar Singh, in his book *Khalsa Sudhar Taru*, and later on in his bigger books called *Khalsa Dharam Shastar* and *Gur Darshan Shastar*, tried to prove that the Sikhs were Hindus, that the Gurus worshipped gods and goddesses, and that it was wrong to convert Mohammedans to Sikhism or to abolish caste system and untouchability. After firing a few more shots in the air this fighter of a losing cause retired to his native city, Rawalpindi, along with his master, Baba Khem Singh and gave no further trouble to the staunch reformers. Baba Khem Singh, however, did much for the spread of female education in the western Punjab, and brought thousands of Hindus into the fold of Sikhism.

#### KHALSA DIWAN OF LAHORE

All the real supporters of reform gathered round Bhai Gurmukh Singh who had founded the Khalsa Diwan of Lahore in 1886. Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha was its patron. Sir Attar Singh, C.I.E., *Shams-ul-Ulama* and *Mahamahopadhyaya*, Chief of Bhadaur, its president, and Bhai Gurmukh Singh its secretary. It also enjoyed the patronage of the Lieut. Governor of the Punjab and the Commander-in-Chief of India. In a short time all the best elements of Sikhism were attracted towards this new Diwan. In the early days of reform, there was not much difference between Singh Sabha and Arya Samaj. *Guru Granth Sahib* used to be opened in the Samaj meetings, and many prominent Sikhs were found working shoulder to shoulder with the promoters of the Samaj. Bhai Jawahir Singh, of Gujaranwala, was one of them. He was a vice-president of the Samaj. Bhai Dit Singh and Bhai Mayya Singh, two great speakers and writers, were also working with him. They were, however, greatly annoyed by the attacks of their Samajist associates on the Sikh Gurus,<sup>3</sup> and they came away in disgust. They were welcomed with open arms by Bhai Gurmukh Singh, who was in them great dynamic personalities, destined to work wonders in the cause of Sikhism. A press was already owned by the Khalsa Diwan. Now a newspaper, called the *Khalsa Akhbar*, was started, with Bhai Dit Singh as its editor. Through his paper and scores of books,<sup>4</sup> written evidently with a gusto and force never known before, he was able to demolish the old theories of his opponents and to create a strong opinion in favour of the new movement. Incidentally modern poetry and especially prose received a great impetus from his advocacy. His allegorical burlesque, called *Swapan Natak*, which was a disguised attack on Baba Khem Singh (Bedi), involved him in some trouble through litigation, but having influential personalities like Sir Attar Singh at his back he came out unharmed.

Two other personalities attracted by Bhai Gurmukh Singh were Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha and Mr. M.A. Macauliffe. Bhai Kahan Singh was a great scholar of Sikh literature. Besides being trained in the old school of scholarship wherein depth of knowledge and mastery of detail was emphasised, he also cultivated a variety and vastness of view which is characteristic of western learning. He did not possess the force and verve of Bhai Dit Singh, but he had more depth and comprehensiveness which made his work more permanent and less polemical. His book *Ham Hindu Nahin*, did more to dehinduise the Sikhs than anything else. His other books, *Gurmat Prabhakar* and *Gurmat Sudhakar* articulated Sikh doctrines most clearly. They were standard guide books and sometimes the only stock-in-trade of Sikh preachers. His later book, the *Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature*, was his *magnum opus* and did much to elucidate the Sikh creed. Indirectly he was also responsible for much of the work done by Mr. Macauliffe, who studied Sikhism under his care and was persuaded through him to give up a very lucrative Government post and join the Lahore Diwan for the purpose of translating the Sikh scriptures. From 1893 to 1909 Mr. Macauliffe worked at this tremendous task, and completed it to the satisfaction of learned Sikhs. But by that time the Lahore Diwan had become defunct, and new leaders, led by inherent superstition or jealousy, did not approve of his publishing the *Guru Granth Sahib* in English. They said that it would mean desecration of the Holy Book, which would be carried about like any other volume without proper respect. Mr. Macauliffe was, therefore, obliged to give up the idea of publishing the translation of the whole Book, and had to content himself with giving only a few portions of it along with the lives of the Gurus.

Even this did not satisfy the factitious party. The Government too, which had promised to help the author with a grant of Rs. 15,000, was now averse to paying anything more than Rs. 5000, which the author declined to accept. He came to Rawalpindi in 1910, when the annual session of the Sikh Educational Conference was being held. Nobody went to receive him at the railway station. Broken in health, and more broken in spirit on account of the debt incurred in connection with the publication of *The Sikh Religion*, he appealed to the promoters of the Conference to include a resolution about his book, recommending that it was a work worthy of Sikhs' consideration. The permission asked for was refused, and the old tottering benefactor of the Sikhs had to return disappointed. He went back to England, and died soon after in 1913. Then a resolution of appreciation was passed at the Educational Conference.

Another luminary who did yeoman's service to the cause of reform was Bhagat Lakshman Singh of Rawalpindi. He joined Sikhism in 1895, when he was thirty-three, and had already made a name as a writer and journalist. Reinforced by the enthusiasm of a new convert he threw himself heart and soul into the reform movement. He was serving as a Professor in the Gordon College, and was at the same time secretary of the local Singh Sabha. His bold advocacy of the Sikh cause, especially in the matter of spreading education among the masses, brought him up against Christian interests in villages, and he was obliged to sever his connection with the Mission College. He came to Lahore, and started a weekly journal, called the *Khalsa* in English. The paper ran its course only for about two years, from 1899 to 1901, but it did much to counteract the nefarious propaganda of certain renegades from Sikhism (Bawa Chhajju Singh and Bawa Arjun Singh) who were spreading misrepresentations about the mission of Sikh Gurus. Bhagat Lakshman Singh returned to Rawalpindi in 1901, and carried on an unceasing campaign of reform, which resulted in the formation of a net-work of Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Schools in the Rawalpindi district. His *Life of Guru Gobind Singh* and scores of booklets, written off and on, laid the foundation of Sikh literature in English, which gives due prominence to the mission of the last Guru which is often forgotten even by Sikhs.<sup>5</sup>

There were many other leaders who touched the reform movement on its different sides. One such Dr Jai Singh of Rawalpindi, the founder of the famous firm of chemists on the Mall, Lahore. He carried on the work of *shuddhi*, reconverting those who had gone away to Islam or Christianity.

The main work of the Khalsa Diwan was the foundation of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1892, and laying those broad lines of reform which made the Sikh community self-conscious and self-contained. The dynamic force generated by Bhai Gurmukh Singh and his great associate was still working in full vigour, when God summoned him away from his field of action, and he died of heart-failure in 1898. Sir Attar Singh<sup>6</sup> had already died in 1896. Bhai Dit Singh died in 1901. The Lahore Diwan could not survive these incessant shocks, and its place was taken by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.

#### CHIEF KHALSA DIWAN

The first meeting of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was held in the Malvai Bunga attached to the Golden Temple on the 30th October, 1902. The inaugural prayer was offered by Babu Teja Singh of Bhasaur.<sup>7</sup> Bhai Sahib Bhai Arjun Singh, chief of Bagarian, was elected president, and Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, secretary of the Singh Sabha of Amritsar, was appointed secretary of the new Diwan. Out of about 150 Singh Sabha, scattered all over the country, only 29 agreed to join. Their representatives, along with 47 others, formed the general body. With the exception of a few leading members who still stuck to the Lahore Diwan for the old sake's sake, most of the local workers, like Sodhi Sujan Singh, B.A., Bhai Takht Singh of Ferozepur, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid of TarnTaran, Sardar Sadhu Singh of the Forest Department, Sardar Dharam Singh of Gharjakh, transferred their allegiance to the new dispensation, and began to give their best to it. Sodhi Sujan Singh became assistant secretary to the Chief Khalsa Diwan. Bhai Takht Singh, a staunch follower of Bhai Dit Singh, opened a research library of Sikh literature and history in connection with the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, Ferozepur, and called it *Bhai Dit Singh Library*. He became an enthusiastic supporter of the new order in the spread of education and religious reform. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, who had done much to counteract the anti-Sikh propaganda of the Arya Samaj established a Panjabi magazine, called *Dukh Nivaran*, in 1906, and through its monthly issues as well as through pamphlets spread useful information about health and hygiene, home and its problems, and many other themes, bearing on modern life. Like Bhai Takht Singh he was a great antiquarian, sweet and humble, firm and persuasive—a type that is becoming rare now a days.

It was such people who fixed the new type of man associated with the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The older type, associated with the Lahore Diwan, was distinguished for his bold, clear-cut views, and intellectual and controversial outlook, making use more often of historical and logical methods than of any spiritual or mystical means. The Chief Khalsa Diwan, on the other hand, represented a new ideology, which did not work so much for discovering new defects in the old system, developing new schools of criticism, or making a bold headway towards neglected reforms, as for supplying the great deficiency of depth and spiritual fervour. So far, according to the need of the time, all the work done had been destructive. The belief of Sikhs in the Hindu books and institutions had been demolished to a great extent and they had been made to stand on their own ground. But they had not yet had time to look at their own ground, much less to think of building their own institutions on it. The only thing constructive done so far had been the spread of

education, and the inculcation of the belief that the Sikhs were a separate community, which should have separate rights, separate institutions, and separate provisions in the law to protect them. Even the Anand Marriage Act, legalising the Sikh form of marriage, came in 1909. For all other purposes they were, and are, governed by the Hindu law. The greatest defect, however, was that our religious practice was not spiritual enough. It consisted mainly of attending a weekly meeting of the Singh Sabha, in which lectures were delivered against Hindus and their institutions, or debates were held to controvert the attacks of the Arya Samajists. It was reserved for the Chief Khalsa Diwan to usher a new era of spiritual uplift. This was the work of certain holy men and gifted musicians. Sant Attar Singh of Mastuana was instrumental in inaugurating the practice of early rising and attending holy meetings where the sacred word was given out in entrancing music. Never since the days of the Holy Gurus had the Sikhs such spiritual experience. Never had they gathered in such large numbers to listen, in their hearts, to the deeply moving voice of the Guru and there from to imbibe the mystery that is called Religion. Bhai Hira Singh *Ragi's* music, interspersed with his sacred lore, swayed the hearts of thousands, including even Hindus, and all forgot the days when the Sikhs and Hindus used to fight over their doctrines. Sant Sangat Singh of Kamalia is another luminary of the same order who has come to reconcile intellect with spirit, and whose spiritual talk subdues all controversies and hushes all bickerings. Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar, who fights shy of speaking in big meetings, has nevertheless had a strong influence in moulding the new type of man, especially among those who lead the movement. His influence on Sikh literature too has been most creative. He may be called almost the originator of modern Panjabi poetry, and his religio-historical romances in prose have done more than anything else to advance the mission of reformed Sikhism. Besides these, Bhai Jodh Singh, M.A., and Sardar Trilochan Singh, M.A., LL.B., have had a great deal to do with the formation of Sikh opinion. The latter with his business acumen, as manager of the Punjab and Sind Bank, has linked up the different Sikh institutions and business magnates with the Bank, and through it with the leaders of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.

The Diwan enjoyed the greatest prestige among Sikhs from 1902 up to 1914. Its secretary, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, was also the secretary of the Khalsa College, the premier institution of the Sikhs, with which were associated the most influential officials of the Government. The members of the Diwan were mostly drawn from the elite of the community. When the Khalsa College went into the hands of the Government in 1908, most of the leaders of the Diwan withdrew from the management of the college and came to found a new institution, the Sikh Educational Conference, which was as important as the College, if not more. It was controlled by the Educational Committee of the Diwan, and held its sittings annually in different centres, wherever it met, it left a school behind it, until in a few years it came to support a host<sup>8</sup> of Primary, Middle and High Schools. It heroically fought for the cause of the Panjabi language, and its influence was felt by the educational, postal and railway authorities. The Sikh schools were not only dispensers of education, but they also served as strongholds of Sikhism wherever they were established. Even the Singh Sabhas, which were organised for propagating reform, could not compete in popularity with the schools.

This spread of education created among the Sikhs a public spirit with which they came to feel their religious and political disabilities. By 1914 this feeling of discontent was aggravated by the *Komagata Maru* and the *Rikab Ganj* affairs, and at the same time the minds of the Sikhs were being stirred by the events of the Great War, which was creating a passion for democracy everywhere. The Sikhs -were no longer content with the leadership of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. Led by such bold papers as the *Panth Sewak* of Lahore, they wanted the Diwan to quicken its pace or to get out of the way and give its place to some other body. But there was no other body yet born, and the



Diwan had to carry on as well as it could. In spite of its representations the Sikh claims had been ignored in the Minto-Morley scheme, and even in the Montford scheme, which recognised the Sikhs' claim to separate representation, only 8 seats out of 54 were recommended for them. In the autumn session of the Punjab Council in 1918, while refusing to accept the amendment of Sardar Gajjan Singh to his resolution recommending the distribution of seats between Hindus and Mohammedans according to the Congress plan, Mian-Fazl-i-Hussain told the Sardar that as his community had kept aloof from the Congress it had no ground to complain. This was a clear indication to Sikhs that they could no longer rely for the protection of their rights on the support of the Government or of those bodies which could not afford to break away from it. The Sikhs, therefore organised a political body of their own, called the *Sikh League*, and held its first session at Amritsar, along with the Congress, in 1919. They also started a paper, called the *Akali*, at Lahore. It had great influence with the common people in villages. A new phase of reform began among the Sikhs. It was called the Akali movement.

#### AKALI MOVEMENT

The previous movements of reform had touched only the white-collar people of cities. The new movement was truly democratic. It came from villages, and up to this time has been controlled mainly by the rural element, which does not make any nice distinction between religious and political matters. It does not see much use for the educated element, which is supposed-perhaps truly-to be supine and nerveless, and therefore unfit to be trusted for showing vigour or sacrifice in times of emergency.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to describe the great movement of Gurdwara reform, which entailed so much suffering and sacrifice. It was indeed a task quite beyond the capacity of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and it was well that the Guru chose a new set of people who alone could have the dash and determination required for the purpose, it opened the way for a real reform of religion, which had been obstructed by the fact that the Sikh temples were in the hands of unreformed priests. No amount of preaching or education, which the Singh Sabha movement had so far achieved, could actually effect any improvement in the rites and ceremonies observed by Sikhs as long as the performers of these rites and ceremonies-the priests-were strongly entrenched behind the law of the land against all reform. It was necessary, therefore, that the management of the temples should be in the hands of those who wanted reform. By going through untold sufferings the Sikhs, called the *Akalis*, have secured a law, which gives them control over all the historical Gurdwaras.

All this change, however, means a change on the management side only, and does not necessarily mean any reform in the service or ritual observed in the temples. In effect, the talk of reform is a luxury indulged in by those who are outside the pale of management. Those who are actually running the show have to look to the taste of the audiences. They cannot afford to make any sudden changes in the daily routine of worship observed in the temples. The Akalis, as priest, do not find themselves as helpless as their predecessors, because the audiences are not the same as before. They have made some improvements. As for example, women are allowed to go up the holy of holies in the Akal Takht, which they could not do before; but it will take some time before they are allowed to take part in the actual services, such as singing hymns in the Golden Temple or taking part in administering baptism. They have abolished certain obnoxious customs, such as the

annual killing of a goat before the Akal Takht, and the worship of idols in the precincts. But other customs, for which there is no authority in Sikhism, still continue to hold the ground.

There is a sacred lamp, called *Jot* still burning in the Golden Temple. The people are still seen pressing the marble walls of the Baba Atal, or touching worshipfully the lock of the treasure room. The anniversaries of the Gurus have begun to be celebrated with great *eclat*, but the Hindu days of *Amavas* and *Puranamashi* are still attracting greater crowds to the Sikh temples. The strange kinds of recitation, such as the *Sampat Path*, are not encouraged, but who can say that recitations still allowed are quite free from superstition?

The reason is obvious. No party that has to run institutions can help being conservative. It has to satisfy many helpful interests, it cannot afford to antagonise its audiences. And the Akalis are no exception to the rule. There are other reasons beside this. The authority of the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, which controls the management of the Sikh temples, is free from outside control, but it is not yet acknowledged by all the Sikh elements as supreme in religious matters. Certain Sikhs, among the Udasis and Nirmalas, whose temples come into the ambit of the Gurdwara Act, also refuse to admit its authority and are ready, when challenged in the courts of law, to declare that they are not Sikhs. (And yet, strange to say, when they succeed in their attempt to save a temple in this way by apostatising themselves, the first thing they do is to offer thanks before the Holy *Granth*!) The Chief Khalsa Diwan has always stood apart, considering itself as competent to decide the Panthic affairs as the S.G.P.C. Under these circumstances the S.G.P.C. cannot feel strong enough to enforce unity of belief or worship, or to apply sanctions when anybody proves refractory. At present there are mainly two schools of thought: one dominated by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, which continuing the old tradition of the Amritsar Diwan, is more conservative; and the other by the S.G.P.C. which, inheriting the extreme tendencies of the Lahore Diwan, is more critical. The former, inspired by Bhai Vir Singh and his paper, the *Khalsa Samachar*, emphasises the divinity of the Gurus who are identified with God, while the latter believes in the humanity of the Gurus and is less mystical. The one stresses the worship of saints, and comes out now and then with biographies of holy men, who preached asceticism and self-renunciation; while the other party holds this kind of thing as mere man-worship and does not encourage too much kowtowing before human beings. They also do not favour the use of a rosary in worship, the whispering of *Mantras* in private into the ears of disciples, the letting or sub-letting of recitations and other mysteries which are indulged in by the saints of these latter days.

In my view, there are two great elements of Sikhism: One is *Nam* (or the Name) and the other is *Sewa* (or Service). The Chief Khalsa Diwan has come to emphasise the practice of *Nam*, and does not see much opportunity for *Sewa*, while the other party has come to monopolise *Sewa*, without seeing much use in practising *Nam*. The desirable thing would be to combine the two. When that is done, the Khalsa will be one and supreme.

Footnotes:

1. *Essays in Sikhism*, Sikh University Press, Lahore, 1944, pp. 129-47.
2. This was a sop thrown to the Sikh notables who had liberally contributed towards the funds of the University. Instead of giving the Sikhs any special privileges in the University, the promoters of the University scheme made a special provision for the teaching of Panjabi in the Oriental College. This privilege was not given to Urdu or Hindi. See the rules of the College as framed

originally in 1888. But now those rules have been modified to include Urdu and Hindi as well. They run: 'The University shall maintain an Oriental College with the main object of promoting the advanced and enlightened study of Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and such modern Indian Languages as the Syndicate may appoint.'

3. (Particularly on November 25, 1888, in the Vachhowali Arya Mandir during the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of the Lahore Arya Samaj - G.S.)
4. Some of them were - *Life of Guru Nanak*, *Durga Parbodh*, *My Discussions with Swami Dayanand*, *Biographies of Sikh Heroes*.
5. For a detailed study of the life and work of Bhagat Lakhshman Singh, see his *Autobiography*, edited by Ganda Singh, published in 1965.
6. He was one of the most learned men of his time. Some well-known books by him were: *The Sakhi Book*, *Travels of Guru Teg Bahadur*, *Rahitnama of Prahlad Singh and Nand Lal*.
7. He became a great dissenter later on, and founded a new association, called the *Panch Khalsa Diwan*, which did much useful work in propagating the mission of Guru Gobind Singh, but in the end floundered pitifully in trying to rearrange the text of the Holy *Granth* by excluding the compositions of the Bards and including those of the Tenth Guru.
8. So far it has held 30 sittings, and has dispensed Rs. 499548 to different schools in the form of aid and Rs. 69200 as stipends to needy students. Before the opening of this Conference there were not more than a score of Sikh schools in the whole province, but now the number is:  
For boys: 5 colleges, 61 high schools, 35 middle schools, 2 lower middle schools, 45 primary schools, 7 hostels, 6 miscellaneous.  
For girls: 1 college, 4 high schools, 25 middle schools, 150 primary, and 111 mixed schools.

**ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF  
SINGH SABHA MOVEMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS  
GURDARSHAN SINGH<sup>1</sup>**

The Singh Sabha was the first movement among the Sikhs which possessed a definite constitution to regulate its affairs and to carry out its programmes and policies. The previous reform movements of the Sikhs differed from the Singh Sabha in character and organisational approach. Both the Nirankari and the Namdhari movements were led by their respective 'Gurus'. In both cases 'Guru' was the supreme authority and his word was the law. Believing in the infallibility and the supremacy of their 'Gurus', the Nirankaris and the Namdharis did not care to alter or improve their organisation.

The Singh Sabha did not derive its inspiration and ideology from any one single individual but was democratic in character. The organisational set up of the Singh Sabha was modelled on lines entirely different from those of the Nirankaris and the Namdharis. The administrative policy of the Singh Sabha leaders was influenced by their sincere admiration of the British people, their institutions and their system of government. The ideas of framing a constitution and holding elections for the Singh Sabha were Western in origin and were something novel for the Sikhs at that time. In this respect, the Singh Sabha represented a break with the old orthodoxy in as much as it did not hesitate to borrow ideas from the West.

The first Singh Sabha was founded at Amritsar in 1873 and was duly registered with the Government, under the name of Sri Guru Singh Sabha Amritsar. *vide* Act XXI of 1860.<sup>2</sup> The inaugural meeting of the Singh Sabha was held on the Dussehra day. The site chosen for the meeting was the Manji Sahib.<sup>3</sup> The meeting was attended by the leading Sikh chiefs, theologians and the important personalities connected with the Sikh Takhts and the Gurdwaras.<sup>4</sup> After a series of discussions, a set of rules and regulations were laid down for the conduct of the Singh Sabha's day-to-day business.<sup>5</sup>

The membership of the Singh Sabha was extended to Sikhs residing all over the province. Certain qualifications were, however, laid down for the members. Each member was required to be a Sikh having a firm belief in the teachings of the Gurus.<sup>6</sup> He was also required to pay a monthly subscription, fixed from time to time, towards the funds of the Sabha. All members were required to take a pledge of service to the community and loyalty to the Sabha.<sup>7</sup> The Sikhs who enrolled themselves as members of the Singh Sabha were all baptised Sikhs but the original constitution made no provision to exclude non-baptised Sikhs from the membership of the Sabha. In the beginning the total number of the members of the Singh Sabha was ninety five.<sup>8</sup> A noteworthy feature of the Amritsar Singh Sabha was that majority of its members were drawn from the upper classes.<sup>9</sup>

The administration of the Singh Sabha was entrusted to an Executive Committee consisting of a president, a secretary and a few other members.<sup>10</sup> The first President of the Amritsar Singh Sabha was Thakur Singh Sandhawalia and its first Secretary was Giani Gian Singh. The overall control and management of the Singh Sabha was vested in the President who presided over all the meetings of the Sabha.<sup>11</sup> The Function of the Secretary was to draft a schedule of business to be laid down in the meetings of the Singh Sabha.<sup>12</sup> As the scope of the Singh Sabha widened, the

number of office-bearers also increased. Besides the President and the Secretary, the new office-bearers included. Vice-President, Assistant Secretary, Giani (Scholar in Sikh scriptures), Updeshak (Preacher), Treasurer and Librarian.<sup>13</sup> The office-bearers were elected for a term of one year but they could be re-elected if they enjoyed the confidence of the members and were thought competent to manage the affairs of the Singh Sabha.

The meetings of the Singh Sabha, *Jor-mels* as they were called, were of two kinds ordinary and emergent. Ordinary meetings were held after regular intervals, of a week or a fortnight, to discuss day-to-day affairs.<sup>14</sup> Emergency meetings were summoned to discuss some important issues which needed immediate attention.<sup>15</sup> Besides this, the Singh Sabha held big conferences on the eve of important Sikh festivals to give wider publicity to its reform programme. At its annual meeting (*Salana Jor-mel*), usually held at the end of the year, the Sabha took a stock of its activities and achievements during the year.<sup>16</sup> All decisions of the Singh Sabha, known as *Gurmatas*, were made by a majority of votes.

Income of the Singh Sabha was raised from the subscription fee paid by the members and the donations made by the Sikh Chiefs and Sardars. The Sabha kept a regular record of its income and expenditure.<sup>17</sup> The original fund, raised at the time of the founding of the Singh Sabha amounted to Rs. 503.<sup>18</sup> The Amritsar Singh Sabha was one of the richest Singh Sabhas because of its greater association with Sikh aristocracy.

The Amritsar Singh Sabha set the tone for the other Singh Sabhas which cropped up all over the Panjab and elsewhere within a short span of a few years. Its counterpart at Lahore was organised almost on the same lines but with a few alterations.

Whereas the Amritsar Singh Sabha was dominated by the Sikh Chiefs and Sardars, the Lahore Singh Sabha became more democratic in character. Its members were drawn from the Sikhs of all classes including the so-called low-caste.<sup>19</sup> Great caution was exercised in keeping away apostates and the opponents of Sikhism. Disloyalty to the Government and non-payment of membership fee were considered to be lapses for which members could be removed from the fold of the Singh Sabha.<sup>19</sup> This Sabha came into existence on November 2, 1879.<sup>21</sup> Its first President was Dewan Buta Singh, and Bhai Gurmukh Singh was its first Secretary. The Sabha set up an Educational Committee to look after the educational needs of the Sikhs.<sup>22</sup> The English well-wishers were also invited to become members of this Committee.<sup>23</sup> The Executive Committee of the Singh Sabha Submitted yearly reports of its activities.

The Lahore Singh Sabha served as a model for many other Singh Sabhas. But despite similarity in composition, the constitution of various Singh Sabhas differed widely at different places, many of which were of mushroom growth and with little stability. Some of them contained incoherent elements, leaving no scope for mutual co-ordination. The Singh Sabhas varied in size from a minimum of five to a maximum running into hundreds.<sup>24</sup> In the beginning, the Singh Sabhas held their meetings in Gurdwaras. But later on when the reformers antagonised the *Mahants* and the *Pujaris* due to some ideological differences, their entry into the Gurdwaras was restricted. This led the Singh Sabhas to construct their own buildings or Gurdwaras for carrying out their activities. Most of the Singh Sabhas had their own *Granthis*, *Rajgis* and *Updeshaks* whose duty was to tour the country, hold Diwans and encourage the Sikhs to come into the fold of the Singh Sabha.

The Bhasaur Singh Sabha, which later developed into the Panch Khalsa Diwan, Bhasaur, greatly differed from the other Singh Sabhas in character and composition. It turned into a stronghold of Sikh militancy under the leadership of Babu Teja Singh, known for his missionary zeal. All members of this Sabha were required to wear the five K's and were made to observe strict religious discipline, failing which they were expelled from the Sabha.<sup>25</sup> They were mostly enrolled from the middle and lower strata of the society and all of them were treated on an equal footing. Babu Teja Singh gave strict instructions to the effect that no member of his Sabha was to be allowed to violate the democratic traditions of the Khalsa.<sup>26</sup> All the office-bearers of the Sabha were known as *Tablias* (servants). The English terms, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant-Secretary and Treasurer were substituted by the corresponding Panjabi terms, viz., Jathedar, Meet-Jathedar, Sewak, Meet-Sewak and Bhandari.<sup>27</sup>

The Constitution of the various Singh Sabhas often depended on local circumstances and leadership. The Karachi Singh Sabha, for instance, had an executive committee of fifteen members out of which six positions were reserved for *Sabaidhari* Sikhs.<sup>28</sup> The Singh Sabhas of Ferozepur and Tarn Taran had female members who were as active as their male counterparts. The Tam Taran Singh Sabha had a special branch for its female members, known as the Istri Sat Sang Sabha.<sup>29</sup>

The rapidly increasing number of Singh Sabhas at various places required the appointment of the Central committee to supervise and co-ordinate the activities of the various units. The growing rivalry between the Amritsar and the Lahore parties resulting in attacks and counter-attacks also led some public-spirited leaders to believe that they must join under a common platform so that the work of reform may not suffer. This led to the founding of the General Sabha at Amritsar, in 1880, which developed itself into a greater organisation known as the Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar on April 11, 1883.<sup>30</sup> At the time of its foundation the Khalsa Diwan had 36 or 37 Singh Sabhas affiliated to it.<sup>31</sup> The Diwan undertook to guide and control the work of the affiliated Singh Sabhas. The office-bearers of the new body were Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot, Patron; Baba Khem Singh Bedi, President; Man Singh office-in-Charge of Golden Temple, Vice-President; Bhai Ganesha Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh Secretaries.<sup>32</sup>

But the newly constituted body was far from making an auspicious beginning. No definite rules and regulations were laid down for the conduct of its business.<sup>33</sup> From its inception it was torn by internal dissensions and bickerings. In the very first meeting of the Khalsa Diwan, a representative of the Rawalpindi Singh Sabha moved a proposal that the names of all Singh Sabhas be changed to Sikh Singh Sabhas, prefixing the word Sikh before their names.<sup>34</sup> The purpose was to include the non-baptized Sikhs into the fold of the Singh Sabha. The proposal was not acceptable to the Lahore party which enjoyed the support of a large number of the Singh Sabhas.<sup>35</sup> But in spite of their opposition, the proposal was carried through due to the influence wielded by the Patron and the president. The Singh Sabhas of Rawalpindi and Sialkot, where Khem Singh Bedi had great influence, lost no time in changing their names to Sikh Singh Sabhas.<sup>36</sup> Bhai Gurmukh Singh and his party took strong exception to it. At the annual meeting of the Khalsa Diwan held in April 1884, Bhai Gurmukh Singh once again took up the issue before the Khalsa Diwan.<sup>37</sup> He requested the President to invite the opinions of the representatives of the various Singh Sabhas who were opposed to the idea of changing the name of Singh Sabhas. Feeling indignant at this, the President ordered the meeting to be dispersed.<sup>38</sup> It was with great difficulty that Bhai Gurmukh Singh and others succeeded in impressing upon him to submit before the majority verdict. Thus the earlier decision to change the name of the Singh Sabhas was negated.<sup>39</sup>

In October 1884, Bhai Gurmukh Singh presented before the Khalsa Diwan a draft of the rules and regulations to be approved and adopted for its constitution.<sup>40</sup> The Raja of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh Bedi, who had taken it upon themselves to speak and act on behalf of the Sikh community, did not approve of certain provisions in the proposed constitution which fended to make it democratic in character.<sup>41</sup> They desired greater powers to be vested in the Patron and the President. This resulted in a serious crisis in the Khalsa Diwan and led to its reorganisation with two patrons (The Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab and the Raja of Faridkot), two Vice-Patrons (Attar Singh Bahadur and Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala), two Religious Secretaries, two Press Secretaries, two Education Secretaries and two Treasures. Baba Khem Singh Bedi was appointed the President.<sup>42</sup> There was some difference of opinion over the appointment of the Chief Secretary. The tie was between Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Bhai Ganesha Singh, the latter belonging to the Amritsar party. For some time both the names remained on the list of office-bearers. In the absence of a written constitution, the tussle for supremacy between the Amritsar and the Lahore parties continued. The Raja of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh Bedi tried to wield absolute control over the Diwan. They did not like any leader of the Lahore party to be anything more than an ordinary member of the Diwan.<sup>43</sup> The gulf between the two parties continued to be widened and ultimately resulted in the formation of an independent Khalsa Diwan at Lahore in 1886.

There were as many as 30 Singh Sabhas who separated themselves from the Khalsa Diwan Amritsar and joined the Khalsa Diwan Lahore in 1886.<sup>44</sup> The Khalsa Diwan Amritsar, thus, received a big set back, with only 6 or 7 Singh Sabhas at its back. It almost became defunct in a few years and was left with only three Singh Sabhas of Amritsar, Faridkot and Rawalpindi.<sup>45</sup>

The Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab and the Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial Forces of India became the patrons of the newly constituted Diwan.<sup>46</sup> The office-bearers of the Diwan included a president, three vice-presidents, one chief-secretary, one joint secretary, two assistant secretaries, one accountant, one treasurer, and five trustees.<sup>47</sup> The total number of office-bearers was in no case to be less than one-fourth of the total membership of the Khalsa Diwan. They were elected for a term of three years but could be removed from office for such lapses as apostasy, violation of the rules of the Khalsa Diwan and continued absence from the meetings of the Diwan.<sup>48</sup>

The membership of the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, consisted of representatives of the various Singh Sabhas affiliated to it and also the representatives of the states where the Sabhas did not exist.<sup>49</sup> All the members of the Khalsa Diwan were required to pay a subscription of Rs. 5 every year. All the affiliated Singh Sabhas were required to contribute one-twentieth part of their yearly income towards the funds of the Diwan. The Diwan also derived its income from the donations and voluntary subscriptions made by the Sikhs and other well-wishers of the community. The control and management of the movable and immovable property of the Diwan was vested in the Turstees.<sup>50</sup>

The ordinary meetings of the Khalsa Diwan were held twice a year, one between the months of March and May and the other between October and December.<sup>51</sup> The venue and the date of the meeting were fixed by the President and the Chief Secretary in consultation with the other members. The President, and the Chief Secretary were also authorised to summon a special meeting in case of emergency.<sup>52</sup> The meetings of the Diwan were held on a written request to this effect made by at least seven or more members of the Diwan. All meetings of the Diwan were required to have a quorum of at least eleven members. The meetings were presided over by the President, who also

supervised the activities of the Diwan. In the absence of the President, his duties were entrusted to the Vice-President. The task of conducting the meetings of the Diwan was given to the Chief-Secretary. The Joint-Secretary and the Assistant Secretaries assisted the Chief-Secretary in his work. A regular account of the activities of the Diwan was kept by the Joint-Secretary.<sup>53</sup>

A noteworthy feature of the constitution of the Lahore Diwan was its decentralization of power. Due provisions were made to avoid concentration of powers in the hands of the President, Chief-Secretary and the other office-bearers. All decisions at the meetings of the Diwan were made by majority of votes. The above constitution was framed by a committee consisting of Attar Singh of Bhadaur, Dharam Singh of Gharjakh, Hamam Singh of Gharjakh, Bhai Gurmukh Singh and Bhai Jawahar Singh.<sup>54</sup> It was registered with the Government on February 19, 1892.<sup>55</sup>

Under growing pressure from its members, the Khalsa Diwan at Amritsar was also forced to adopt a written constitution for the conduct of its business. In September 1887, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Bhai Avtar Singh Vahiria to lay down rules and regulations for the constitution.<sup>56</sup> The Committee submitted its report after a month. The draft constitution prepared by the Committee was duly approved by the Khalsa Diwan and was given wide circulation in the press.

The constitution of the Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, greatly differed from that of the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, in nature and composition. Whereas the Lahore, Diwan strictly adhered to the principle of social equality and treated all its members on an equal footing the Amritsar Diwan was divided into two bodies, the *Mahan-Khand* and the *Saman Khand*, the former representing the aristocrats and Sardars and the latter consisting of those members who belonged to the middle class.<sup>57</sup> It was clearly laid down that the patron of the *Mahan-Khand* was to be a person with royal lineage. The president of the Mahan-Khand was also to be elected from the big Sardars or Raikes.<sup>58</sup> The first patron of this body was Raja Bikaram Singh of Faridkot and Baba Khem Singh Bedi was its first president. The office-bearers of the Saman-Khand were: Man Singh, in charge of Golden Temple, President; Bhai Gulab Singh, Vice-President; Bhai Ganehsa Singh, Chief Secretary.<sup>59</sup> All members and office-bearers of the Diwan were required to sign a pledge of loyalty to the Diwan, to the British government and also to the Sikh Takhts and Gurdwaras.<sup>60</sup> The tenure of members as also of the office-bearers of the Diwan was two years.<sup>61</sup>

The meetings of the Saman-Khand, which mainly consisted of the representatives of various Singh Sabhas affiliated to the Diwan, were held after regular intervals to discuss day-to-day affairs of the Diwan. No decision could be taken without two-third majority of votes.<sup>62</sup> All decisions of the Saman-Khand were subject to the approval of the Mahan-Khand. The meetings of the Mahan-Khand were held to discuss important issues and such urgent matters as required immediate attention.<sup>63</sup> The Mahan-Khand also supervised the activities of the Saman-Khand.

The Khalsa Diwan Amritsar failed to win popular support. The concentration of power in the hands of aristocrats was inconsistent - with the principle of social equality preached by the Singh Sabha. In their anxiety to remain loyal to the Mahants and the Pujaris of Sikh Takhts and Gurdwaras, who did not appreciate the new ideology of the Singh Sabha, the leaders of the Khalsa Diwan Amritsar failed to come up to the expectations of those who wanted to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity. The majority of the Singh Sabhas had already shifted their allegiance to the Lahore Diwan. The Khalsa Diwan Amritsar failed to emerge as a representative body of the Sikhs. The



Lahore leaders dubbed the Diwan as an 'unconstitutional body' since it was not registered with the Government.

The last decade of the nineteenth century also witnessed the birth of a large number of Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans, many of which preferred to remain autonomous and did not like to affiliate themselves either to the Amritsar Diwan or to the Lahore Diwan. Although the Singh Sabha and Khalsa Diwan had become synonymous terms, yet the Singh Sabhas were, generally, established at small towns and villages and the Khalsa Diwans were established at bigger towns and cities.<sup>64</sup>

*The Khalsa Samachar*,<sup>65</sup> in one of its issues, compared the Singh Sabhas with municipal committees and the Khalsa Diwans with district boards. There was hardly any contact between these Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans. The result was that their activities could not be co-ordinated. Some of them did not have written constitutions and did not keep any regular account of their activities. It was at this time that the Sikhs began to realise the need of having a Shiromani Jatha (Central organisation) to control and guide the work of numerous Sikh societies.<sup>66</sup>

With the formation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1902, the leadership of the Sikhs passed into the hands of more enlightened and educated men who ushered in a new era of constitutional advancement. The new constitution, which was framed in 1902 and was registered with the Government on July 9, 1904, aimed at unifying the divergent elements of the Singh Sabha. The number of Singh Sabhas, Khalsa Diwans and the other Sikh societies which were affiliated to the Chief Khalsa Diwan at the time of its founding was 29.<sup>67</sup> But the number multiplied in a few years and reached the peak figure of 105 in 1920.<sup>68</sup> The constitution of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was framed by a committee consisting of Arjan Singh of Bagrian, Tarlochan Singh, Mehar Singh Chawla, Bachan Singh, Bhai Mohinder Singh of Mansuran, Sodhi Sujan Singh, Bhai Gurbaksh Singh and Sunder Singh Majithia.<sup>69</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan had five committees; General Committee, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Advisory Committee and Life-members Committee.<sup>70</sup> The members of the General Committee consisted of representatives of various Singh Sabhas, Khalsa Diwans and other Sikh societies which paid one-twentieth part of their income towards the funds of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.<sup>71</sup> Besides the representatives of affiliated societies, the membership of the General Committee was derived from important personalities of Sikh Takhts and Gurdwaras, important personalities of Sikh States, Sikh officers of the Defence Services, registered delegates and fellows of the Sikh Educational Conference and those shareholders of the Punjab and Sindh Bank who paid 10% of the profits of their shares to the Chief Khalsa Diwan.<sup>72</sup> Those who donated Rs. 500 or more towards the funds of the Chief Khalsa Diwan were also entitled to become members of the General Committee.<sup>73</sup> The minimum age prescribed for the members of the General Committee was 21. Each member was to be an *Amritdhari* Sikh and was required to have the knowledge of Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script. Each member was required to pay a subscription of Rs. 2 per month.<sup>74</sup> The maximum number of members under each category, mentioned above, was not allowed to exceed one fourth of the total membership of the General Committee.<sup>75</sup> This was done to provide a democratic character to the Diwan. The duties and the functions of the General Committee were:

1. to fulfil the aims and objects of the Chief Khalsa Diwan,
2. to advise and guide affiliated societies, Diwans and subcommittees appointed by the Chief Khalsa Diwan,
3. to have full control on all the assets of the Chief Khalsa Diwan,

4. to elect office-bearers of the Diwan and members of the Executive and Finance Committees,
5. to affiliate approve any society or committee and to disaffiliate according to the rules any society already affiliated,
6. to deliberate over the annual budget and reports recommended by the Finance and Executive Committees and to approve them after alterations and additions, if considered necessary,
7. to appoint sub-committees for special purposes and to give or withdraw powers to any affiliated society or Diwan.<sup>76</sup>

The Executive Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan consisted of twenty one elected members which included President, Vice-President, Resident President, Honorary Secretary, Under Secretary and Cashier. The members and the office-bearers were elected for a period of three years.<sup>77</sup> Besides presiding over the meetings, the president was entrusted with the task of supervising all the activities of the Diwan and watching that they were carried on in accordance with the aims and objects and rules of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.<sup>78</sup> In the absence of the President, his duties were carried on by the Vice-President. The Resident President conducted the day-to-day affairs of the Diwan. The Honorary Secretary was entrusted with the task of carrying on the routine duties in consultation with the other members of the Executive Committee.<sup>79</sup> The Under Secretary was supposed to assist the Honorary Secretary and was also asked to carry on his duties in his absence. The task of keeping an account of the assets of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was given to the Cashier.

The meetings of the Executive Committee were held after a month's interval but could be called earlier if so desired by the President, the Secretary or five members of the Committee. The venue and the time of the meetings was fixed by the Secretary in consultation with the other members. All meetings were required to have a quorum of seven members. All decisions of the Executive Committee were subject to the approval of the General Committee.<sup>80</sup>

The Finance Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan had ten members who were elected for a period of three years by the members of the General Committee.<sup>81</sup> The Finance Committee was entrusted with the task of scrutinising the month-to-month income and expenditure of the Diwan. The Committee submitted regular reports of its activities to the Executive Committee. All new items of expenditure were sent to the Financial Committee for its consent before they were sent for final approval by the Executive and General Committees.<sup>82</sup> All meetings of the Finance Committee were required to have a quorum of three members.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan derived its income from the subscriptions from the members, affiliation fee from the affiliated societies and other donations and subscriptions such as *Daswandh* (one-tenth part of one's income) made by the well-wishers of the *Panth*?<sup>83</sup> The Finance Committee was given the task of looking after all assets of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.

The advisory committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan had three kinds of advisers, religious, legal and administrative.<sup>84</sup> In addition to these, the Executive Committee had the power to elect advisers for other purposes also. The election of these advisers was made every year by the Executive Committee in its Baisakhi meetings.<sup>85</sup> But those elected in the previous year could also be re-elected. The opinion of the advisers was sought and given due weight by the members of the Executive Committee, while deciding important issues.

The life members committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan included those persons who promised to work for at least twenty years in accordance with the wishes of the Diwan.<sup>86</sup> This committee was entitled to elect from among themselves members to the Executive Committee of the Diwan but their number was not to exceed one-fourth of the total membership of the latter.<sup>87</sup> All members of the Life-Members Committee were required to be *Amritdhari* Sikhs and were not to be below the age of 21. All life associates were paid a monthly allowance, fixed from time to time, by the Chief Khalsa Diwan in recognition of their devoted services.<sup>88</sup>

One peculiar feature of the constitution of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was that it was flexible in nature and was subject to amendments. It goes to the credit of the Singh Sabha that it proved to be much better organised movement than the Nirankari and the Namdhari movements before it and the Akali movement after it.

#### Footnotes:

1. Lecturer in History, Guru Nanak University, Amritsar.
2. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1897-98* (Lahore 1898), No. 62, p. ccxix.
3. Singh Sabha Amritsar, *Niyam* (Amritsar 1890), p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
5. *Idem.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies/or 1897-98* (Lahore 1898), No. 62, p. ccxix.
9. Persons like Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, Kanwar Bikaram Singh of Kapurthala and Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot, who dominated the Amritsar Singh Sabha, were drawn from the traditional Sikh elite and were from the upper strata of the Sikh society.
10. Singh Sabha, Amritsar, op. cit., pp. 3-5.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.
12. *Idem.*
13. Khalsa Tract Society, *Khalsa Directory* (Amritsar, 1899), pp. 1-2.
14. Singh Sabha, Amritsar, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
15. *Idem.*
16. Singh Sabha, Amritsar, *Report 1908* (Amritsar 1909), pp. 2-4.
17. Singh Sabha, Amritsar, *Report, 1909-10* (Amritsar 1910), pp. 8-10.
18. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1897-98* (Lahore 1898), No. 62, p. ccxix.
19. Persons like Prof. Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh, and Bhagat Lakshman Singh, who were the true architects of Lahore Singh Sabha, were men either from the middle or from the lower rungs of the Sikh Society.
20. Singh Sabha, Lahore, *Niyam Ate Upniyam* (Lahore 1897), pp. 2-4.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
22. Singh Sabha, Lahore, *Dharam Ate Vidya Pracharak Sri Guru Singh Sabha Lahore di Report* (Lahore 1880), pp. 16-18.
23. *Khalsa Akhbhar*, Lahore, September 30, 1898.

24. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1897-98* (Lahore 1898), No. 62, pp. ccxix-ccxxix.
25. Singh Sabha, Bhasaur, *Gurmate Ate Faisle* (Bhasaur 1904), pp. 1-4.
26. Singh Sabha, Bhasaur, *Salana Report 1897-98* (Bhasaur 1898), p. 2.
27. Singh Sabha, Bhasaur, *Gurmate Ate Faisle* (Bhasaur 1904), pp. 6-8.
28. *Rules and regulations of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Karachi* (Karachi n.d.), p. 1.
29. Sri Guru Singh Sabha Tarn Taran, *Sankhep Report Ate Niyam Upniyam* (Tarn Taran 1937), p. 22.
30. Ganda Singh, *A History of the Khalsa College Amritsar* (Amritsar 1949), 3-4.
31. Gurmukh Singh, Bhai, *My Attempted Ex-Communication from the Sikh Temples and the Khalsa Community at Faridkot in 1897* (Lahore 1898), 12.
32. *Ibid.*, 1-2.
33. *Ibid.*, 2-5.
34. *Ibid.*, 2.
35. *Idem.*
36. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1897-98*, (Lahore 1898), No. 62, p. ccxvii.
37. Gurmukh Singh Bhai, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-5.
38. *Idem.*
39. *Idem.*
40. Petrie, D., *Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911, The Panjab Past and Present* (October 1970), Vol. IV, Part II, p. 310.
41. *Idem.*
42. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
43. Gurmukh Singh, Bhai, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
45. Petrie, D., *op. cit.*, p. 311.
46. Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, *Khalsa Diwan de Mul Sutar Athva Kaide Ate Kanun* (Lahore 1893), p. 7.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
53. *Idem.*
54. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
56. *Sri Gurmat Parkashak*, Amritsar, Part I, October, 1887.
57. Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, *Niyam Arthat Qanun Khalsa Diwan* (Amritsar 1887), pp. 3-6.
58. *Idem.*
59. *Sri Gurmat Parkashak*, Amritsar, Part I, October, 1887.
60. Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
61. *Idem.*
62. Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10.
63. *Idem.*
64. *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, May 6, 1901.
65. *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, March, 15, 1905.
66. *Chief Khalsa Diwan di Salana Report, 1902-3*, (Amritsar 1904), p. 2.
67. *Idem.*

68. *Chief Khalsa Diwan di Solhven, Satarven Ate Atharven Varsh di Trevarshak Report*, January 1, 1918 to December 31, 1920 (Amritsar 1920), pp. 36-39.
69. *Chief Khalsa Diwan di Karvai* (Amritsar 1902), p. 24.
70. *Chief Khalsa Diwan, Mul Sutra* (Amritsar 1906), pp. 2-3.
71. No association like the Singh Sabha or the Khalsa Diwan that had an income less than Rs. 5 per month or had less than 5 members on roll, was entitled to send any representative to the Chief Khalsa Diwan. For details see *Chief Khalsa Diwan Mul Sutra* (Amritsar 1906), pp. 5-6.
72. *Idem.*
73. *Idem.*
74. *Idem.*
75. *Idem.*
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
78. *Idem.*
79. *Idem.*
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
82. *Idem.*
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
85. *Idem.*
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
87. *Idem.*
88. *Idem.*

## CHIEF KHALSA DIWAN-FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE (1902-1951)

### THE BEGINNING

Twentyfour years after the annexation of the Panjab to British Indian dominations, a movement for the protection of the Sikh religion and of the Sikh rights was set on foot in 1873. It was the renowned 'Singh Sabha Movement'. It made an incredibly rapid progress and worked a miracle towards arousing a new hope and a new consciousness among the Sikh masses. Singh Sabhas sprang up with an alacrity still unknown and the work was taken up with all earnestness.

To unity the various units (Singh Sabhas) that had sprung up all over the land of the Five Rivers, to concentrate their energies, to guide and control their activities, a central organisation was the need of the hour. It was left to the young and indefatigable Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, a scion of the noble family of Majithia Chiefs, to do the job and he did it in a noble way.

As a result of his band of pioneers' supreme efforts, a big Diwan was held in Malvai Bunga, Amritsar on 30<sup>th</sup> of October, 1902. After an *Ardas* of inception by Bhai Teja Singh of Bhadaur, bye-laws of the Diwan were formally adopted. Thus, on this memorable day, came into being the Chief Khalsa Diwan which hopes to live till eternity radiating all-round the distressed world the bright rays of hope and happiness through its cult of 'Love and Bhakti' and the propagation of the Guru's Name. The same was later on registered on the 9th July, 1904, under Act XXI of 1860.

Sir Sundar Singh Majithia was indeed lucky in having the life-long and loving co-operation and unstinted and singular devotion of no less a personality than the saintly and poetic soul, Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh, who was a Guardian Soul to the Blessed Sardar. The late Sardar Harbans Singh of Atari who embodied in his own person the devotion of a Sikh and the zeal of a crusader was another of the Holy Band. Add to it the names of Sardar Tirlochan Singh, the economist whose soft word turned away the worst equal and of Principal Bhai Jodh Singh, the deep theologian with the acrobatics of an agile mind and the cannonball flashes of intellect, and the picture is complete of the selfless 'Five' who worked throughout this period of 50 long years.

### AIMS AND OBJECTS

As far as lies in its power, the Diwan undertakes to strive for-

- (a) the uplift of the Sikhs in all spheres, spiritual, social, moral, and economic;
- (b) the propagation of the Guru's Divine word and carrying on of His teachings to the farthest hamlet and spread of the fragrance of 'Nam' all round;
- (c) the removal of illiteracy and spread of education amongst all irrespective of caste and creed;
- (d) the protection of the political rights of the Sikhs and redress of their grievances through constitutional means.

### THE CONSTITUTION

The Diwan, a Central organisation based entirely on democratic principles, invites to its rolls, notables of the four Sikh Takhts (Seats of Religious Authority), the Golden Temple and other Sikh Gurudwaras, leading Sikhs from the States, the Sikh gentry, the Sikh militia, the Sikh graduates, the

Sikh intelligentsia and other well wishers of the *Panth*. It enjoins upon taking in its folds the representatives of the affiliated Singh Sabhas and other Sikh organisations. The Fellows and Delegates to the Sikh Educational Conference, the share-holders of the Punjab and Sind Bank who have dedicated one tenth of the dividend of their bank shares to the Diwan for the service of the *Panth* and the *Sabaiks* and Life-Members of the Diwan have also to send in their elected representatives. Its portals are thus wide upon to the various sections of the *Panth*.

Only those are enrolled as members who are Amritdhari Sikhs and can read and write Gurmukhi. The members agree to contribute Rs. 15/- a year and one tenth of their Daswandh (viz. one percent of their income) or Rs. 10/- per month whichever be the smaller, towards the cause. Those who accept the principles and have sympathy with the ideals of the organisation and aspirations of its members can be enrolled as such. They have to sign in lieu of the acceptance of the same.

#### THE ACHIEVEMENTS-EDUCATIONAL

The need of the hour in the year 1902 was to educate the Sikh masses who steeped in illiteracy and ignorance were sure to lag behind in the race for progress and advancement that commenced with the spread of Western type of education during the English regime. With this end in view, to the Educational Committee, (Chief Khalsa Diwan) was brought into existence in January 1908, in a meeting held at Majitha House, Amritsar. During the very same year, the first session of the Sikh Educational Conference was held at Gujranwala with Sardar Baghel Singh, Rais of Kula, Lahore, in the chair.

With the coming into vogue of the Sikh Educational Conference, the work for the propagation of education began in right earnest. Schools and Colleges commenced springing up all round. The results achieved were simply marvellous and the response by the Khalsa to the clarion call of duty was so great that the sister communities envied the Sikhs. In 1917 Nawab Zulfiqar Ali, who led the Muslim deputation to the 10<sup>th</sup> Sikh Educational Conference at Lahore, marvelled at the 'Car-speed' of the Sikhs as against their own 'cart-dragging' and asked the Sikhs to carry their Muslim brethren along with them.

In a short span of time, the number of schools and colleges which stood at the humble figure of seven prior to the inauguration of the conference rose up to 58. Alas! the partition of the country with the consequent unparalleled transplantation of population in the land of the Five Rivers, bringing in its trail untold misery and ruination, has also resulted in the Sikhs losing for ever 79 of their cherished institutions, comprising of 51 colleges and schools for boys and 28 for girls.

The percentage of literacy among the Sikhs as a result of the aforesaid all-out drive was sure to go up. In a brief space of 33 years, the Sikhs could hold their heads high and could vie with other communities in this respect. In the year 1947 the percentage of educated Sikhs stood at 17.03% as compared to 16.35%, 6.97% and 7.76% of the Hindus, Muslims and Christians respectively.

Another outstanding result of the Sikh Educational Conference was the impetus it gave to the study of the Punjabi and subsequently to the progress in the study of Sikh history and Sikh literature. As a result of the deliberations of the conference, of the resolutions passed in its sessions and the representations made on its behalf, Punjabi, though denied its rightful place, came to be adopted as an optional language and began to be taught in schools.

## KHALSA COLLEGE

Khalsa College, Amritsar, the nucleus of Sikh Culture with its palatial buildings, its well-equipped laboratories, its grand library, its well kept farms and its extensive grounds, though not started by the Diwan, was taken over by its pioneer workers under the lead of the indomitable Sir Sundar Singh Majithia in the year 1902 at time when, with the waning influence of the Khalsa Diwan Lahore, it was tottering. It then grew from a small and impoverished beginning, with only a little over 50 students, into a splendid seat of learning with 1410 students now on its rolls and 57 professors and with an endowment fund running into over 20 lakhs. The Khalsa College is what Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and his band of pioneers have made it. It is not difficult to guess what devoted affection, time, industry and money they had lavished to secure these ends. The staff quarters erected out of the funds collected separately by the Chief Khalsa Diwan through the 'Sewa Damra, Re. 1/4/- Fund' bear testimony to the zeal of the Diwan workers in this behalf.

## RELIGIOUS AWAKENING-PARCHAR

The Reform Movement as seen above, set a going due to the initiative and endeavours of the Diwan and its band of selfless workers, while working for the removal of outside influences in Sikh homes, carried the gospel of the Truth of the Guru's word to every nook and corner of the land of the Five Rivers. Through Dharmak Diwans, through the sweet and soul-elevating Harikirtan, through religious literature written and published, the Guru's teaching were disseminated. The names of the devotees who worked day in and day out, who meditated and who preached, like the renowned Sant Attar Singh Ji, Sant Sangat Singh Ji of Kamalia, and Bhai Hira Singh Ji, are all associated with the Diwan in this noble work. As a fruit thereof, Singh Sabhas cropped up in large numbers, Gurdwaras sprang up everywhere and centres for the preaching of the Gurbani (Guru's celestial Hymns) originated. The schools, the colleges and the Pathshalas which had come into existence as a result of the drive for education all helped in this all-pervading effort in the propagation of the right Sikh spirit.

## KHALSA TRACT SOCIETY

The coming into being in the year 1894 of the Khalsa Tract Society founded by Bhai Kaur Singh and affiliated to the Diwan, which under the guidance of the great Sikh poet, Bhai Vir Singh Ji was flooding the land with religious literature of a very high order was but another factor leading to the intensification of this movement for *Parchar*. The writings of the venerable Bhai Sahib had their miraculous effect and went a long way in bringing about the required transformation.

## GURMAT PARKASH BHAG SANSKAR

With the same end in view, 'Gurmat Parkash Bhag Sanskar'-a treatise on the Sikh rituals and ceremonies commencing right from the early initiation of a child into Sikhism to the last march, and the manner of their performance strictly according to the tenets of the Sikh Religion was published by the Diwan. It took full five years (1910-1915) to do so. The opinions of all the Sikh men of



learning and of all the Sikh organisations were called for, properly wighed, sifted, assimilated and incorporated into the same. Many other useful books and pamphlets were got written by such renowned authors as Professor Pooran Singh, Sardar Karam Singh Historian and Principal Jodh Singh. The same were published and circulated in thousands.

#### KHALSA PARCHARAK VIDYALAYA

To overcome the paucity of preachers of the right type, imbued with the noble spirit and fully equipped for the work ahead, a Parcharak-Vidyalaya (Missionary College) was started at Tarn Taran in the year 1908. It has since then been turning out a good number of enthusiasts fully trained for the job. The name of the noble founder, Master Ishar Singh, who went abroad to Malaya and other countries for the collection of funds, stands immortalised.

#### PARCHAR IN SIND

The Parchar movement was not kept confined to the Punjab. Sind was taken in its fold. Ever since the year 1906, a Parcharak Jatha was sent there for the purpose. Incredible though it may appear the late Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and the late Sardar Harbans Singh Atari accompanied this Jatha every year in person. The Selfless service they rendered in the Diwans, held there, the cleaning of the utensils in the Guru's Kitchen and the cleaning of the congregations' shoes by the two aristocrats, could not but have magical effect. In no times the movement struck deep root and the Sindhis were won over to the Great Guru. Many a high and noble family of Sindhis as that of the Diwan Lilaram Singh, Retired Judge, Dewan Chuhar Singh, Deputy Collector, and Dewan Kishen Singh, I.T.O., came into its folds. The love of the Sindhis for Gurbani became proverbial and Guru Arjan's *Sukhmani-Psalm* of Peace-began to be chanted in every Sindhi home in the early hours of the day.

#### SARDAR HARBANS SINGH MISSION OF SIKH BRETHERN

The organisation of Sardar Harbans Singh Mission of Sikh Brethren in memory of the heroic Sardar Harbans Singh of Attari, the noble great-grandson of the renowned S. Sham Singh Attariwala and in appreciation of the great and good work done by the Sardar who embodied in his person the zeal of a crusader and led a life of noble dedication and self-abnegation was another plank in the Diwan's programme. It aimed at the enlistment of 10000 devotees to the noble cause agreeing to pay Rs. 3 a year to be spent for the furtherance of the cause the great Sardar lived for.

There has been a response but it is not up to the expectations. An enrolment of members is not an encouraging figure.

The memory of the great Sardar of Atari calls upon the Khalsa to fulfill what he lived and worked for.

#### THE ANAND MARRIAGE ACT

The Reform movement started and nurtured by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, while working for the removal of outside influence in Sikh homes and emancipation of Sikh rites and customs met with a grim opposition at the hands of the orthodox Sikhs. It excited ridicule in villages. The band of pioneers, the 'Singh Sabhaites,' were ridiculed and even despised. Those who listened to them and took to the much needed reform in marriage ceremonies were subject to social boycott. There were then the legal hitches. The '*Gur Maryada*' was not recognised by Law. It added to the reformers' difficulties and resulted in slowing down the progress. But all this was overcome with the passage of the Anand Marriage Act in the year 1909 introduced by Tika Ripduman Singh of Nabha and piloted so ably by Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia in the Imperial Legislative Council against a very stiff opposition.

#### SIKHS AND THE KIRPAN

The movement for the emancipation of Kirpan was set on foot in the year 1912-1913. The Sikhs who considered the Kirpan-the sword-as a part and parcel of their very spiritual self and who, as enjoined by the Tenth Guru, the valiant founder of the Khalsa, wore it day in and day out, could not brook the same being placed under the Arms Act. There was an agitation resulting in some arrests, but soon as a result of the efforts of the Diwan and the influence exerted by the Hon'ble Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia the Kirpan was exempted from the Arms Act on 17th July, 1911.

#### ACHUT-UDHAR

The uplift of the untouchables has been all along since its inception on outstanding feature of the Diwan's activities. Pledged to the propagation of the Divine principles as enunciated by the Great Gurus, the Diwan could not in any way countenance any difference between man and man. The valiant founder of the Khalsa had done away with these differences by administering 'Amrit' through the same 'Bowl'. The Diwan through its team of missionaries and chain of religious conferences worked incessantly for the untouchables. In 1920, the Khalsa Bradari, as they called themselves, assembled in a big Diwan at Amritsar for the purpose of administering Amrit to its members. The same was boycotted by the orthodox Sikhs but there came the Majithia Sardar and his co-workers accompanied by the staff and the students of the Khalsa College and helped in making it a great success.

#### IN THE FIELD OF POLITICS

The Chief Khalsa Diwan worked for the political rights of the Sikhs at a time when there was no other Sikh organisation to espouse the Sikh cause in that sphere. An intrepid fight for the Sikh rights began under its banner. Some of those who regard the Diwan's policy as moderate may be surprised that the Diwan was then viewed with suspicion by the Government of the day and its leaders received the usual Police attention. Bhai Jodh Singh had to leave the Punjab for a fairly long time. The fight to secure their just rights and endeavours to obtain for the Sikhs their rightful share in the services, however, continued unabated. Through its ceaseless efforts the Diwan succeeded at last in getting 20% share reserved for the Sikhs in the service during the year 1920. The same was again got explicitly laid down on the 8th of October 1938 when Sir Sunder Singh himself was in the Government formed under the new constitution.

Similarly when the Sikhs were denied their rightful share in the new Government as adumbrated in the Reforms Scheme, the Diwan did not take it all lying down. A two member deputation with Sardar Ujjal Singh, a devoted worker of the Diwan, as one of its members, was sent to England. The credit for it goes entirely to the Diwan.

## FOR ECONOMIC UPLIFT

### THE PUNJAB & SIND BANK LTD.

For the amelioration of the economic ills and the economic backwardness of the Sikhs, a step in the right direction was taken in the year 1908 with the starting of the Punjab and Sind Bank Ltd. at Amritsar. It bears the stamp of the personality of the great Sikhs Economist, Sardar Trilochan Singh, who with ardent devotion and rock-like persistence raised it to a position of eminence in the Banking world. The solidarity, the bank enjoys 'and the incalculable service it has rendered to the Sikhs in general and the Sikh institutions in particular, speaks volumes of the sagacity and financial acumen of its worthy founder.

## INSTITUTIONS OF THE KHALSA DIWAN, AMRITSAR

### (1) KHALSA ADVOCATE

The Paper Khalsa Advocate was started in the year 1903. It was first brought out in English. Since its very start, it has been playing a magnificent role in the advocating the cause, Diwan stood for in propagating its ideals and carrying its messages to the Sikh intelligentsia and masses.

### (2) CENTRAL KHALSA ORPHANAGE AMRITSAR

The orphanage was started in the year 1904 for the fatherless and motherless children of the *Panth*. It was nurtured by the hands of Sir Sundar Singh Majithia who worked for it through out his life.

### (3) KHALSA PARCHARAK VIDYALA

It was founded in the year 1908 with the object of turning out Sikh missionaries, fully trained and equipped for the work of Parchar.

### (4) KHALSA DASTKARI SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, AMRITSAR

Brought into existence in the year 1913, through the munificence of Rai Bahadur Sardar Sadhu Singh, one of the founders of the Diwan, it has been all along fulfilling the objects for which it was founded.

### (5) ASHRAM FOR THE BLIND

It was started in the year 1934 and is housed in the Khalsa Orphanage building but has a separate staff attending to the special needs and requirements of the blind inmates. Education is imparted through 'Braille'. A special feature of the institution is the work done by it in writin out *Adi-Granth* (Holy Sikh Scriptures) in Braille and wherefrom the blind may read and recite it for the benefit of all.

### (6) HOMEIO HOSPITAL, AMRITSAR

A free Homeo-hospital was established in 1942. It has established itself as a pillar of strength and has elicited admiration for its fine work.

(7) KHALSA HOSPITAL, TARN TARAN

Another renowned institution of the Diwan. The Central Khalsa Hospital, which owes its existence to Dr. Harnam Singh, a great benefactor of mankind.

## SIKH EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

### GANDA SINGH

With the close of the year 1967, the Sikh Educational Conference completed the 60th year of its existence. Under the inspiration that the late Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and his associates in the Chief Khalsa Dewan received at the Karachi session of the Muslim Educational Conference in 1907, a meeting of 21 leading Sikhs was called at Amritsar on January 9, 1908, with Sardar Tarlochan Singh as Chairman and Bhai Jodh Singh as Secretary. It was there that the foundation of the Sikh Educational Conference was laid.

On January 19, a committee of five was set up-Sardar Gurcharan Singh, Sardar Kharak Singh and Bhai Dan Singh of Lahore, Professor Jodh Singh of Amritsar and Bhai Gulab Singh of Gujranwala-to frame the constitution of this organisation, its real enthusiasm and guidance came from Bhai Vir Singh of Amritsar who in later years became the driving force behind this venture.

The first session of the Conference was held at Gujranwala on April 17,18 and 19 under the presidentship of Sardar Baghel Singh, Reis of Kulla (Lahore). Thus set in this great movement of educational renaissance in Punjab. The movement covered not only the Sikhs but also other communities.

The Conference soon became a great source of inspiration for the Sikhs. Schools sprang up in quick succession throughout Punjab. There were only seven Khalsa schools in 1908 when the Conference came into existence and by 1947, the number went up to 340, in addition to a number of divinity schools, and schools for orphans, the blind and the handicapped. Over two dozen Punjabi libraries and literary associations also came up.

The thought-provoking presidential addresses and speeches of intellectual giants like Sir Sardar Jogendra Singh, Professor Puran Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh and Raja Sir Daljit Singh at the Conference sessions are among the great masterpieces of educational literature and are occasionally quoted by scholars in support of arguments for religious and moral education in Indian schools and colleges.

#### COMMUNAL HARMONY

The Sikh schools were not confined to central and south eastern Punjab which had a predominantly Sikh population. They were also established in Muslim-majority areas of Rawalpindi and Multan-and at Peshawar and Quetta, where the Sikhs were in a negligible minority.

There the Khalsa schools and a college catered mostly for Muslim and Hindu students in a spirit of selfless service and served as centres of mutual goodwill and understanding. Muslim young men coming out of these schools acted as virtual ambassadors of national unity.

The friendly relations thus established were strengthened by the *esprit de corps* engendered by the mixed staff of Khalsa schools which, unlike other denominational institutions, liberally employed Hindu and Muslim teachers and set an example of co-existence. There are instances of non-Sikhs

serving as headmasters of Sikh schools established in Sikh-majority areas, and financed exclusively by endowments and donations made by Sikh shrines and Sardars.

The Sikh Educational Conference has not only worked for the education of boys but also of girls, for whom a large number of schools and colleges were established during the last 60 years. The incentive, in this case, was provided by two of the greatest advocates of women's education and promoters of the Conference, Bhai Takht Singh of Ferozepur, and Baba Nihal Singh of Kairon, father of the late Sardar Partap Singh Kairon. The lead given by these veterans and their schools, as also by a couple of Arya Samajist institutions, helped raise the status of women in the Punjab and emancipate them from old shackles and prejudices.

The Conference has also played a conspicuous role in the advancement of physical education. Passages from the addresses of experts like Dr Hamam Singh and Sardar Harbail Singh, delivered at the Conference sessions have provided guidelines for those entrusted with this part of education.

## REFORM MOVEMENT

The Conference also drew the attention of the Sikh intelligentsia to the depressed classes and appealed for justice to them in the light of the teachings of the Gurus. The result was revolutionary awakening among the masses. It indirectly led to the Gurdwara Reform Movement against professional priests.

The promotion of the study of Punjabi language and literature was an important item on the programme of the Conference. Year after year, through its resolutions it impressed upon the Government the importance and urgency of imparting education to students through their mother tongue and insisted upon the introduction of Panjabi as medium of instruction. A beginning was made with Khalsa School where most of the subjects were taught in Panjabi. In due course, Punjabi secured its rightful place in schools and built up a strong case for its introduction at the University level.

Introduction of the study of the history of the Punjab in degree and post-graduate courses of Punjab University was strongly advocated in the second half of the 1930s by Bhai Jodh Singh, then Principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar. A department for research in the history of the Sikhs was established there in December 1930. The two succeeding decades saw it coming to fruition with a rich and varied collection of Persian and Gurmukhi manuscripts bearing on the history of Punjab, with particular reference to the Sikhs. There is hardly any old and rare book on this subject in any Indian or foreign language which is not available in its library. Thus Khalsa College, Amritsar, the venue of the Conference for the Sixth time, has become a centre of research in history.

The Sikh Educational Conference is a non-political body functioning under the patronage and guidance of the Chief Khalsa Dewan, Amritsar, and is controlled by the 13 members Sikh Educational Committee. The fees received from fellows, delegates and visitors attending its annual sessions are the main source of its income, in addition to the National Fund raised by donations at the close of each session. The expenditure includes aid to schools and colleges, stipends and scholarships to needy and deserving students and maintenance of an inspectorate and the office of the committee.

Footnotes:

1. *Souvenire* 49<sup>th</sup> Sikh Educational Conference, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1967.

## THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS AT THE TIME OF ANNEXATION<sup>1</sup>

### DR ROSHAN LAL AHUJA

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC

It is remarkable, says the General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Proper, for the years 1849-50 and 1850-51<sup>2</sup>, that female education is met with in all parts of the Punjab. The girls and the teachers (also females) belong to all great three, tribes, namely, Hindus, Mussulmans and Sikhs. The number, the Report continues, is not, of course, large but the existence of such an education almost unknown in other parts of India, is an encouraging circumstance. In the city of Lahore, writes Robert Montgomery,<sup>3</sup> there were 111 girl schools and at Kusoor-'a flourishing seminary of 17 girls chattered Gurmukhi or read the Pushtoo legends of the hill and plain Rajputs!' This is some-what novel and I am not aware that out of Calcutta (where female education has been lately introduced) girls schools are to be found. The girls, are, the note adds, the children of the residents of the different Mohallas and are all the children of the Mussulmans. The teachers are females and the *Quran* alone is taught. (The girls who chattered Gurmukhi could not, obviously, be Muslims.) There are 16 girl schools in the city of Lahore. The average number of girls in each will be about 6. In one school there are 15 and in another 11 girls. At Jhelum Lieutenant Bumes, Dr. Gerard and Munshi Mohan Lal halted at a mosque built by a sacred virgin who was a very religious lady and had devoted herself to the perusal of the *Quran* which she had learnt by heart.<sup>4</sup>

It is, however, difficult to say that Hindu and Sikh girls received no education in the district or division of Lahore, simply because no returns are available.

Even in the far-off districts of Multan division, girls received their education, be the circumstances ever so difficult. In the district of Pakpattan,<sup>5</sup> at the village of Bublanna two girls read the *Quran* with their father, Jullal, the village Lambardar. In the Jhang<sup>6</sup> district, a few Mussalman and Sikh girls read the *Quran* and the *Granth* at their parents' home. The children of many Hindoo parents are taught at home.

Speaking of Muhammadan women in Ludhiana, Rose Greenfield wrote that they were taught, perhaps, to read or rather repeat by rote some Chapters of the *Quran* in Arabic but they seldom learnt the meaning of the words and only repeated them like parrots. Of the rural ladies of Kabul, she wrote that in Kabul itself, it had been the custom for women of high rank at least to learn to read, and several old ladies of princely families had been taught in their youth. They welcomed the English lady teacher to instruct their young women.<sup>7</sup>

It will appear from the evidence that public schools for girls were found only in big places or in mosques. The education of girls, however, for reasons discussed above, was mostly carried on at home, and is, therefore, described as domestic education.

In her efforts for the cause of Christian education in Ludhiana district. Rose Greenfield opened, according to the prevailing tradition, a nice little school for girls in the house of Sahib Devi, the widow of a Hindu Mahajan. In another village, of Sahgawal, the old Lambardar offered her his house for the purpose.

Some of the District Officers were not aware of this fact of domestic education, nor could



others collect any facts and figures of it. Major Edward in his note on Female Education in the Jullundur District, 27 May, 1852, is fully aware of this disability when he writes that 'this enquiry is limited to schools public and private but does not extend to domestic education for it is difficult to ascertain how many male children are taught at home, how much more so to get a return of females.'<sup>8</sup>

The statistics of indigenous female schools were not included in this inquiry, says A.R. 1881-2 (para 38), but it is not unusual for young girls to receive religious instruction in some parts of the province and in one district of Hazara upwards of 200 were reported to be at school.

'We can do little more than assume that in the families of Sheikhs, Syads and Pathans there are few females who do not learn to read the *Quran*, that there are none among them who are allowed to read anything else, and that among other castes there are not many who know so much of this. The note further adds that there are no less than six public girl schools in the city of Delhi all of which are conducted by *Punjabi women*.' Female education, the root of all good for Hindustan is hardly planted there yet by the English, wrote Arnold in 1862; yet, he adds, in the Punjab it had, at out coming, a natural and healthy growth.

Mr. Mcleod<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, leans too much upon his returns for his conclusion regarding Female education. In the department of female education all is as yet pretty blank in so far as returns show. Some of the Mohammadans teach their females to read the *Quran* by rote but no more and where a Hindu female acquires some knowledge of the written character and of accounts it is usually by force of individual character as evinced later in life-the education of the girls being a thing generally unknown amongst the Hindus.

Nonetheless, Mr. Mcleod, does take into account what he calls 'the Partial education of the female'. The girl schools, so-called there are none; a considerable number in comfortable circumstances study at home privately with a view to read the *Quran*, or among Hindus to keep household accounts and reading and writing simple letters. The partial education of females had been more general than among the better class of Hindus in old provinces. Elucidating his remark further, Mr. Mcleod says that a few females only in wealthiest families being instructed and this usually only to the extent of being able to read over and repeat portions of religious books which they comprehend but inadequately, if at all.

Exploring the scope for Christian education in the villages of Ludhiana, Rose Greenfield came across a lady who was of great repute in the neighbourhood because she could read and had read a good many books on the Hindu and Sikh religions. It appears, therefore, difficult to be dogmatic about the lack of education among women.

Mr. Bayley, Offg. Deputy Commissioner of the Kangra district, in his note on female education of April 24, 1852, advances the same view. It is only females of the very highest classes and in the most wealthy houses who are educated at all. They are generally taught-here emerges a new point of information-by their family priests and their education does not, I am told, usually extend beyond religious books. In some cases, the note adds, ladies themselves apply this further to the study of the ordinary Hindoo love tales and even, though rarely, learn enough of writing to read and prepare a common letter. Regarding books available for secular study, Rose Greenfield wrote, that the character of most of native books is such that it were better for women not to read at all than to acquire a taste for such literature. One or two instances also are known in which ladies of

rank have qualified themselves to carry on correspondence in Persian but these are looked upon as examples rather worthy of admiration than imitation.

Speaking of the Hazara district, Major Abbot<sup>10</sup> wrote that in many parts little girls might be seen studying with other pupils under the Mulla. Along with boys, writes Dr Sufi, girls were allowed to attend school though co-education did not go beyond the elementary stage.<sup>11</sup> Hir, the heroine of the Romance, *Hir* by Waras Shah, following the tradition, writes Charles Swymeron, was educated at the mosque, the Mulla of which acted as the Kazi of the locality. Boys also studied at the same mosque (*Romantic Tales from the Punjab*, 27). Bhai Bishan Singh and Bhai Narain Singh bear testimony to the vogue of co-education at the early stage in Dharmasalas where little boys and girls learnt their 3 Rs., together at the feet of the Grunthee. Mr. Darling's testimony is also to the same effect. In his *Rusticus. Loquitur*, he makes mention of some Gurdwaras in which arrangement for the teaching of girls also existed.<sup>12</sup> It is thus evident that the education of females among the Muslims was more common than among the Hindus. While among the latter education was confined to the four walls of the home, among the Muslims little girls also attended the mosque school and some time read with the boys of small age in the same mosque. The education was no doubt in the hands of priests in either case and occasionally an old lady<sup>13</sup> or a member of the family, father or, brother, would look after the instruction of sisters or daughters. Yet the more significance of the liberal genius of the Sikh female schools, was found existing in the Manjha, says E. Arnold, where Sikh, Hindu and Mussalman girls were taught by female teachers of their own creed.

Among the Sikhs, as has been indicated above, the Sikh girls studied the *Granth*. Further evidence is available in the Settlement Report or Ludhiana which says that young girls were likewise thus far instructed, that is, to the extent of reading and writing Gurmukhi by a reader of the *Granth* who, if not permanently attached to a rich family, usually resided in it for some 6 or 7 years, and the children of other neighbouring families were similarly admitted to share in the instruction. Among the Sikhs in general, and the Jats in particular, the women were remarkable for their physical constitution and agricultural industry as well as intelligence and ability. Both Major Edward and Mr. Brerton had the same opinion of them. Often a Sardar requested the English Officer to postpone the enquiry until he had referred it to his wife. Even while attending a court, women would accompany their men folk lest they should commit any egregious blunder.

Among the poor classes, however, Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, women are valued, wrote Baylay, in proportion as they are useful in assisting the labours of the family, the diversion of their time would be judged as a positive loss of money. In the unequal struggle for existence, indeed, it required all hands to eke out a petty existence, it holds good today as well as then. The testimony of Rose greenfield who explored the villages of the Ludhiana district in her efforts for propagating Christianity through the education of the village folk is interesting and seems to accord with the picture of women in Rigvedic times. The boys and girls had a great deal to do in the villages: making dung cakes, taking the cattle out to graze, gathering fodder, helping to drive the bullock at the well or the sugar mill, and all sorts of farm operations fell to the share of the boys. The girls helped usually in cooking, gardening and spinning, cleaning utensils, and plastering the floors and walls of the house. Then in the harvest time the wives and daughters carried bread to the men in the field, and the poor went gleaned or picking cotton pods.

Footnotes:

1. *Indigenous Education in the Punjab Until Annexation with Special Reference to the Times of the Sikhs.*
2. Para 376.
3. ER, 6-10, 23.11.1850.
4. MDAB, 1, 345 f.
5. R, Vol. xii, 16 ½-17. 7.2.1852.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Greenfield 3, 13.
8. Vide (4).
9. GR, 1-7, 6.5.1857.
10. Education Record, 175 ½, 21.8.1852.
11. Al-Minhaj, 1, 2.
12. RL, 196, 234.
13. Major Edward's note MDABI, I, 345 f.s

**KHALSA COLLEGE AMRTSAR<sup>1</sup>**  
**PROF. TEJA SINGH**

Soon after the establishment of the Lahore Diwan an active campaign was started to found a central college for the Sikhs to be worked in connection with a system of schools in the outlying districts. The movement was due to such enthusiastic workers as Prof. Gurmukh Singh of the Oriental College and Sardar Jawahir Singh, a clerk in the N.W.R. office, Lahore, and they were whole-heartedly helped by the Government and the Sikh States. Those were the days when the Sikhs fully trusted the Government as their best friend; and the Government too fully confided in the devotion and friendship of the Sikhs tested in many trying crises. That was the time when a Viceroy could say: "With this (educational) movement the Government of India is in hearty sympathy. We appreciate the many admirable qualities of the Sikh nation, and it is a pleasure to us to know that, while in days gone by we recognised in them a gallant and formidable foe, we are to-day able to give them a foremost place amongst the true and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen Empress;<sup>2</sup> and a Lieutenant-Governor could feel "that the British Government owed the Sikhs a debt of gratitude for their large share of the credit for victories won by Punjabi Regiments in Hindustan and in China, and afterwards in Abyssinia, Egypt and Afghanistan."<sup>3</sup>

The Sikhs, too, appreciated this sympathy in such glowing terms: "They are actuated by no other motives than those of philanthropy, of friendliness towards the Sikhs, and we are very grateful to them."<sup>4</sup>

The College was founded in 1892, Colonel W.R.M. Holroyd, Director of the Public Instruction, Mr. J. Sime, another D.P.I., Sir W.H. Rattigan, Mr. W. Bell, Principal, Government College, and several other European gentleman gave active assistance to the Sikhs in the work of founding and conducting the College. They were associated with the Sikhs with the latter's free consent and were elected as special members, simply to help them and were not there to exercise official control.

At first the idea was to open the College at Lahore. This was the well-considered opinion of the leaders of the Lahore Diwan, who were supported in this by the Government. The Lieut. Governor urged that Lahore was the centre of all intellectual activities, and if m<sup>^</sup> Sikhs chose to keep away from it, they would suffer intellectually (*oot ke oot rahoge*). The leaders of the Amritsar party, however, were for locating the College at Amritsar. The tussle went on for a long time, until the Lahore party had to yield before the superior propaganda of the Amritsar Party, and the decision was made in favour of Amritsar.

The next question was of choosing the locality. The Government offered the whole land extending from the Ram Baghi including the historical gardens, to the Railway Station. But the same advisers who had urged the Sikhs to avoid Lahore now came forward to advise the avoidance of the neighbourhood of the city, which was supposed to offer all sorts of temptations to the would be students. At last, with the help of Mr. Nickel, the Secretary of the Municipal Committee, the present site was chosen, and the villagers of Kot Said Mahmud, Kale, etc., were persuaded to offer their lands covering about 100 acres for Rs. 10,000 in all. In return for this generosity their children were promised exemption from the payment of fees.

The site chosen was eminently historical, it was the place where the first battle was fought between Sikhs and Mughals in the days of the Sixth Guru. What a happy turn of events that the descendants of those contestants for military glory should now be rubbing shoulders in the same fields for winning laurels in healthy games or in the arts of Peace!

On 22nd October, 1893, the institution began as a Middle School. Three years later High classes were opened, and then it was raised to the status of a college by the opening of Intermediate classes. In 1899 came the B.A. classes and in 1905 the science classes up to the B.Sc. The M.A. class was added in 1916.

When, owing to the death or abstention of its active members towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Lahore Diwan gradually deteriorated, the College too was found verging towards bankruptcy, and it was seriously proposed by Sir Mackworth Young, the Lieutenant-Governor, that the college classes should be abandoned altogether. But fortunately the Chief Khalsa Diwan, another central body, came into existence at Amritsar just at the time when the Lahore Diwan became defunct, and Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, the moving figure in the new dispensation, became Secretary of the College in 1902. To facilitate business the unwieldy College Council, under the advice of the Lieutenant-Governor, delegated all its governing powers to a small Managing Committee of thirteen members. With the return of public confidence and the patronage of princes, the financial condition of the College began to improve, and in 1904, as a result of a great Sikh Conference held at the College under the presidency of the venerable Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha, the Endowment Fund, not including the promises, went up by a leap to Rs. 15,30,477, and the Main Building Fund stood at Rs. 3,28,480 including Rs. 50,000 granted by the Government. Sir Charles Rivaz, the Lieutenant-Governor, exerted himself utmost in the interest of the College, and with his help ½ anna per rupee on the Government revenue was collected from the Sikh zemindars.

The policy of the Government up to that time had been of trust, and in return for its help it did not require any official control to be introduced.<sup>5</sup> But after some time the questionable policy of Lord Curzon, inaugurated by the Universities Act of 1904, came to overtake the former policy of sympathy; and when the mistrust of the educated classes led the Government to take the Universities under a stricter State control, the Khalsa College, which was the fountain-head of Sikh education, also came in for its share. A little incident<sup>6</sup> in the College and in general unrest in the country in 1907 scared away the old trust which had always inspired the Government officials in their dealings with the College. After the Managing Committee had worked for six years, much to the advantage of the Institution, it was discovered by the Government and the Punjab University that the Committee had been illegally constituted in 1902 and that its funds were bogus.<sup>7</sup> The threat of disaffiliation was held out, unless the fundamental rules of the Society were changed, which meant that the Society should consent to the introduction of Government control. A sub-committee, appointed by the Punjab Government and consisting of the Commissioner of Lahore (Chairman), the Director of Public Instruction, a Sikh Sardar who was a 'safe' man, and Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia who protested all along, proposed revision of the constitution of the College. The draft rules, approved by the Government and passed by an Executive Committee suggested by the Government, were placed before the old Council on 10th June, 1908, but without the requisite number of votes forthcoming the rules were declared passed, and the remaining votes were secured later on by July 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>8</sup> By the new arrangement the Commissioner became president, and the Deputy Commissioner, the Director of Public Instruction, the Political Agent, Phulkian States, and the Principal were appointed *ex-officio* by the Government to the College Council. With the Commissioner as Chairman, the Deputy Commissioner as Vice-Chairman of the Managing

Committee, and the Secretary, nominated and removed by the Government, the effective control of the College may be said to have passed into the hands of the Government.

The Principal, Mr. Cole, could say complacently that “the reconstitution of the College Managing Committee on the lines indicated by the Government and University has served to place matters on a more definite basis”; but the Sikhs thought otherwise. There was a great outcry in the community. The independent-minded members, like Sardar Harbans Singh of Atari, resigned, and the position of Sardar Sunder Singh also became more and more difficult. The great influence he commanded in the management was too much for the Principal and the official members, and “the Government expressed a desire that the constitution should be changed as it did not work well.”<sup>9</sup> It was proposed in September 1912, that the number of members from the British districts should be reduced and the Secretary should not be an honorary but a paid officer, to be appointed and removed by the Government. He was not to have a seat on the Managing Committee, and his powers were further sought to be limited and placed at the mercy of the Principal. After a hard contest the Secretary’s position was more or less maintained, but the proportion of the members from the British districts on the Committee was reduced, and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab was given the power “to suspend the rules and to direct the Committee to take such action as the special circumstances may appear to demand, and-it shall thereupon be binding upon the Committee to take such action.” Sardar Sundar Singh had, of course, to resign his office in November 1912, and certain ‘strong’ men on the staff, like Prof. Jodh Singh, M.A., and Sardar Narain Singh, M.A., were forced to retire soon after. To help the institution the Government consented to provide three English professors, including the Principal to the College.

The College became very unpopular and, as admitted by the new Secretary, was openly cried down as a Government college. The Lieutenant-Governor, who came to distribute prizes in 1914, noted this change in the attitude of the Sikhs, but tried to justify the officialising of the College by referring to the happy results of the Sikhs being led by British officers in the army. The story of India in the leading strings was repeated here. The same efficiency and the same outward show of prosperity<sup>10</sup> was there, but it stunted the growth of the native genius.

Some of the apathy of Sikhs towards their College was overcome by the new Principal, Mr. G.A. Wathen, who loved the institution and believed in the greatness of its future. He chose to forego the chances of becoming the Director of Public Instruction, and preferred to remain at the head of this institution in the most trying of times in its history. He developed the College from different sides until in efficiency and numbers it could vie with the foremost colleges in the Province. He used all his influence with the Government in the interest of the College, getting a special grant of three lakhs for the completion of the main building, persuading the authorities to accept the idea of opening a railway station opposite the College bearing its name, and getting employment for hundreds of its alumni in the higher grades of government service. He was the first to put before the Sikh the idea of turning the Khalsa College into a university. One day suddenly he called a meeting of the staff, and announced that he had just come from Simla with a university, in his pocket. He set about preparing a scheme for the Sikh University, and talked seriously of securing a charter for it, which was to be at least as good as that of the Aligarh or the Benares University. It was contemplated that the Prince of Wales on his visit to Amritsar would inaugurate it. But the emergence of the Akali movement just then diverted the attention of Sikhs in quite another direction and the sympathy of the Government too was suspended for the time being. In the turmoil that followed it was feared that the College might suffer a permanent set-back, but the opportune

intervention and bold but wise initiative of the staff not only saved the institution from the storm, but secured its release from the government control.

Long before any political movement had begun in the country, the Sikhs had been talking and writing about nationalising the management of the Khalsa College. They had requested the Government in their Educational Conference of April 1920 to hand over the control of the College to the community. Resolutions to the same effect were passed by Sikh associations all over the Province, may even in Basra and Baghdad. The professors of the College also had, a year before, drafted a few essential changes to be made in the constitution of the College, and the principal had sent the draft to the Commissioner Chairman. But nothing substantial had come out of it. Now Seeing that the storm of Non-co-operation was coming, and fearing that it would destroy their beloved College, they wanted to be before hand with it by proposing changes themselves and getting the indefensible weakness removed. They decided to take strong action, so that their earnestness might not be doubted. They sent a letter to the Government asking it to withdraw its control from the management of the College before 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1920, or they would resign. After much haggling for a month, during which the College remained closed and the professors had to resign, the thing was done and the College saved. By that time the first wave of educational Non-cooperation had spent itself.

The wisdom of the staff lay in the fact that by acting strongly in the matter they had taken the wind out of the sail of the non-cooperators who wanted to see the College disaffiliated; and at the same time they were able to free the College from the government control. They scrupulously avoided giving the impression that they were acting in collusion with the extreme element in the community. Throughout the campaign they did not make any violent speeches, nor did they allow any outsiders to come into the College for agitating among the students. When they put in their resignations, they asked Bhai Jodh Singh to offer prayer on their behalf. When the Government asked them to suggest names of the new members who were to take the places vacated by the Government members, they again avoided the extreme element and put forward the names of moderate Sikhs, such as Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Sardar Harbans Singh of Atari, Bhai Jodh Singh etc. They did not touch the seats allotted to the Sikh States Sardar Sundar Singh became the president and Sardar Harbans Singh the secretary of the Managing Committee. After some time the Principal's chair also came to be occupied by a Sikh.

The new management began to work with enthusiasm. It was unhampered by any differences with the Akalis, who freely associated the leading members of the management and the staff with the inmost circles of their movement.

Differences, however, did arise later on when the Akali movement gathered greater momentum, and great sacrifices had to be made, in which some of the professors of the College too were involved. A very salutary rule was promulgated by which no employee of the College could take part in outside campaigns of unacademic nature. But troubles now and then have been cropping up in the College, as a result of outside melees, for which the differences between the Akali and the Chief Khalsa Diwan elements are mainly responsible. One such trouble occurred in 1937, which resulted in the removal of six professors who were, however, able to found a new college at Lahore. Thus does God bring some good out of much evil. Khalsa College has lost nothing by this exodus, and the community has gained a new college in a central place like Lahore. But these upheavals leave a bad taste behind, creating disharmony in the community, which being very small cannot afford to bear these incessant shocks. The bitterness created does not allow the parties to

work together in any capacity and for any purpose. As for instance, there can be no research in Sikh history or religion, which requires the co-operation and sympathy of all sections of the community. Nor can the Panthic institutions make any advance towards their inherent destiny.

The wisest thing for the community would be not to allow party quarrels to invade the academic institutions, which should be looked upon as the sacred temples, of learning to be respected and supported by all. This can be done only if we learn to distinguish between institutions and associations. Associations are always managed by the common vote of constituent elements. But institutions are like homes, surrounded by the halo of permanency, tradition, quietness of atmosphere, and filial respect. This halo is impossible to maintain if every now and then the noise of party strife invades the sacred precincts, and the relation of labourers with their factory owners is allowed to develop between the alumni and their *alma mater*. The Khalsa college has a great future before it, which can be attained only if it is left alone.

#### Footnotes:

1. Essays in Sikhism, Lahore, 1944.
2. Lord Lansdowne in his speech at Patiala on 23rd October, 1890.
3. Sir J. Lyall while laying the foundation-stone of the Khalsa College main building on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1892.
4. The Secretary of the Khalsa College Council, while referring to the European members of the Council in his speech at the opening ceremony of the Khalsa Collegiate School on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1893.
5. The European members did show some anxiety in 1900 to reserve the Principalship for a European even when a Sikh at a great sacrifice was offering himself for the post, but on this point the Sikh members themselves were divided. Even the appointment of Sardar Sundar Singh as Secretary in March 1902 was strongly opposed by the European members, who wanted Mr. Cole, the Principal, to be also the Secretary, but they could not withstand the growing influence of the new Sikh party and, in spite of the threatened deadlock, Sardar Sunder Singh was confirmed in his position.
6. The Sikh engineer, Sardar Dharam Singh, who was working honorarily and was against carrying on the building operations on the original extravagant scale, was replaced, at the suggestion of the Lieutenant-Governor, by a paid European engineer. This appointment and specially Major Hill's remark about the honorary services of the Sikh engineer, that the 'labour of love was nonsense,' created a great sensation in the community. About 75 Sikh associations sent resolutions of protest against the European member's remark, from which the Managing Committee were also obliged to record their dissociation. There was a strong agitation against Europeans or officials being present on the management. When the new engineer came to the College on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1907, some boys are said to have behaved rudely towards him. The whole student body put on black badges and held a fast. The Government was highly offended and the Phulkian States withheld payment of the interest on their endowed money.
7. The reference was to the fact that the donations of the Sikh States, on which the College mainly depended, were deposited with the States themselves and were not placed in the hands of the College trustees. But this had been the case from the beginning, and up to the present remains the same.
8. See the Secretary's report for the year 1908-09.
9. The Secretary's report for the year 1912-13.



10. More than 15 lakhs have been spent on the buildings alone and the capital for the maintenance of the College exists mainly on paper. The Government and the States can stop the College any day by refusing their grants.

## BHAI JAWAHIR SINGH-ARYA SAMAJ-SINGH SABHA<sup>1</sup>

Bhai Jawahir Singh was born in Amritsar in 1859. After passing through a successful school career, he entered the service of the late Sind-Punjab and Delhi Railway Company. Accounts Department, in 1876. In 1882 he attended the Law class of the Punjab University for one year. In January 1886, he entered the Manager's office of the North-Western Railway and making steady progress from time to time he eventually rose to the position of the Superintendent of the office which position he now holds.

He has now put in more than 30 year's service to his credit, and in his letter, dated 24th May, 1907, to the Railway Board, the Hon'ble Mr. S. Finney, C.I.E., Manager, North-Western Railway, has stated that he (Bhai Jawahir Singh) has "rendered good service throughout this period."

2. During all these years Bhai Jawahir Singh, a man of untiring energy and zeal, has found time to devote himself to the moral and educational interests of his fellow-countrymen. In 1883 he was one of the promoters of the D.A.V. College. Lahore, but, shortly afterwards, he found out his mistake and at the request of his Sikh friends (notably Sardar Bikram Singh Ahluwalia of Jullundur and Sardar Sir Atar Singh of Bhadaur), who saw how valuable the services of such a man would be to his own community, he severed his connection with the Arya Samaj, and has ever devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of his co-religionists, using without stint both his abilities and his leisure time to improve the educational and social status of his Sikh brethren.

3. In 1885 Bhai Jawahir Singh was appointed a Fellow of the Anjuman-i-Punjab in recognition of his services to Sikh literature and education. He appeared before the Public Services Commission on 21st December, 1886, and gave his evidence, it is published *in extenso* in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1886.

4. In 1886 he claimed the *Gaddi* (of the *Head Granthi*) of the Golden Temple, Amritsar, but although it was generally admitted that his qualifications and merits were superior to those of the rival candidates he was not successful.

5. In the case of the late Maharaja Dhuleep Singh, he gained for himself a certain measure of unpopularity owing to his unswerving loyalty of the British Raj. This unfortunate incident led to the division of the Khalsa Diwan.

6. Shortly afterwards (in 1888) he did not hesitate to incur the displeasure of certain of his educated Sikh friends by his outspoken warnings to the community to abstain from any expression of sympathy with the so-called "Indian National Congress".

7. Another instance of Bhai Jawahir Singh's fearlessness and loyalty to his convictions is shown by his public rebuke to the Arya Samaj, on account of their uncalled for attacks on the two Chief Gurus of the Sikhs. (*Vide* Appendix D.)

8. In 1889 he published several books, of which two, *viz.*, 'The poverty of India', and 'Thoughts of Duty', were favourably reviewed by English newspapers. (*Vide* Appendix E.)

9. Colonel W.A.J. Wallace, R.E., Director, N.W. Ry., tried several poets to prepare a chronogram in Persian to engrave it on golden lock required at the opening ceremony of the Lansdowne Bridge over the Indus at Sukkur by H.E. Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay. Of all chronograms the one prepared by Bhai Jawahir Singh was approved and accepted, and on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 1889, he got a note which ran as follow:

“Bhai Jawahir Singh. -Allow me to congratulate you as the best poet of all that we tried.”

10. Bhai Jawahir Singh availed himself of several opportunities in which he approached the Government with Addresses on behalf of the Sikh community. Some of these are mentioned in Appendix F.

11. His great work in connection with the establishment of a National College for the Sikhs is noteworthy. He, in conjunction with two other Sikh gentlemen (now deceased), was one of the original promoters of the Scheme. After years of hard work and in the face of much opposition and intrigue, the funds were collected for the erection of the present magnificent College Boarding House, and he was fitly elected Honorary Secretary of the Khalsa College Council in December 1892-a position which he held up to December 1906. In his letter dated, Otterburn, the 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1899, the late Sir William Rattigan, K.C., M.P., wrote to Bhai Jawahir Singh as under:

“You have laboured, as I know, in the good cause from high patriotic motives and I trust your services will not be lightly forgotten (*Vide* Appendix G.)

12. His long and arduous services, given gratuitously for the benefit of his National Institution, have won the appreciation of the highest officials and Educational authorities in the Punjab, and whatever other causes of discord may exist among themselves, the Sikhs cannot but be unanimous in admitting that they owe him a great debt of gratitude for his endeavours to bring the advantages of education within the reach of all classes of their community.

13. In July 1897 Bhai Jawahir Singh was appointed by the District Magistrate, Lahore, as a member of the Committee of the Management of Maharaja Sher Singh's Samadh at Shah Bilawal, Lahore, and in September 1897, he was elected as a member of the Calcutta Literary Society.

14. In November 1899 he was appointed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, Panjab, as a member of the Panjab Text Book Committee which office he still holds. He is a life member of the Panjab Public Library and has also been a member of its Managing Committee.

15. He was appointed by the Panjab University as an Examiner of the Budhiman (proficiency), Widwan (High Proficiency), and Gyani (Honours) Examinations of the Oriental College, Lahore. He had taken a prominent part in advancing the claims of the Panjabi language in 1882 when the Education Commission had visited Punjab under the Presidency of the Hon'ble Sir W.W. Hunter.

16. He was appointed as a Fellow of the Punjab University in November 1904. He is, perhaps, the first in the Railway Department who has, had this academical distinction.

17. His name is enrolled in the list of Assessors or Jurors and he has, whenever called on to do so, helped the Court in the trial of criminal cases.

18. He is life and soul of the Khalsa Diwan of which he has been Chief Secretary and the Vice-President for several years and is one of its original promoters. The Diwan was established in 1883 and registered under Act XXI of 1860 in the year 1892. It counts among its patrons Lords Roberts and White. Sir James Lyall, Sir Dennis Fitz Patrick and Sir Macworth Young.

19. He is respected by the Sikh Chiefs of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kapurthala, and has the privilege of observing *Bartwara* (mutual friendly relations) with them on occasions of joy and sorrow.

## APPENDIX B (Vide para 5)

1. In April 1886, Maharaja Dhuleep Singh had sent from London a circular letter to Punjab announcing his intention to come and live in India at Ootacamund in Madras, and to embrace Sikhism. He referred therein to the refusal of the Government to permit him to visit, much less live in the Punjab. *Newspapers* like the *Statesman* in Bengal and the *Tribune* in Punjab blamed Government as ungenerous, heartless and cruel. The Maharaja had then a stronghold on the feelings and affections of the people of the Punjab. Several letters appeared in newspapers showing sympathy and love for him and welcoming him to the Punjab. He had already intended to come to India in 1883 when the country was plunged in the agitation caused by Mr. Ilbert's Bill. But at that time, he was very wisely made to defer his visit. He, however, telegraphed for Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia, and for his *priest*. The news of Dhuleep Singh's intended residence in India had cheered the old Sikhs who, ignorant of the Maharaja's new religion, still entertained feelings of veneration and devotion towards the son of the 'Lion of the Punjab.' An attempt was made in certain quarters to translate this feeling into a political force in 1886 and in the following years.

2. The action of Kukas was also somewhat aroused to renewed activity. The great bulk of Bhai Ram Singh's converts were artisans, agriculturists and people of low caste who had nothing to lose and every hope of gain in expected turmoil and disturbances. A heavy blow had, no doubt, already been dealt against his movement by the prompt severity with which it was suppressed, but it had not died out nor had conversions ceased altogether. The political devotion to the Maharaja in 1886 implied hostility to the British Rule and no patriotic Sikh could tolerate the spread of such a feeling. Bhai Jawahir Singh in his usual quiet manner worked hard to check the spread of this feeling, and although he incurred thereby the very great displeasure from certain quarters (which it is unnecessary to say also contributed to his losing his claim to the *Gaddi* of the Golden Temple) he had the cordial help of late Sardar Sir Atar Singh of Bhadaur, and many other patriotic and loyal Sikhs. The Maharaja was stopped at Aden by the then Resident, Brigadier-General Hogg, under orders from Lord Dufferin.

3. In the meantime Bawa Nihal Singh, published a book in Urdu, the *Khurshid Khalsa*, in which he prayed for Maharaja Dhuleep Singh getting the throne and Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia the Prime Ministership of the Punjab. This open insult to the loyalty of the Khalsa could not be tolerated, and Bawa Nihal Singh was expelled from the Sikh Community in April 1886 by the Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, till he obtained the pardon of the Government. The late Bhai Gurmukh Singh of the Oriental College was then the Chief Secretary of the 'Diwan, and naturally he came to the front in the matter. The expulsion was accepted by all Singh Sabhas, except those of Amritsar, Rawalpindi and Faridkot. The inevitable result was the division of the Khalsa Diwan. The Amritsar Khalsa Diwan had in Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot their patron and in Baba Khem Singh

Bedi, their President. They then determined to suppress the leaders of the Lahore Khalsa Diwan of which Sardar Sir Atar Singh was the President. The Editor of the *Khalsa Akhbar* (the organ of the Lahore Khalsa Dewan) was prosecuted for libel by Bawa Udai Singh, nephew of Baba Khem Singh, at the instigation and expense of Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot. Bawa Nihal Singh's son was in the employ of the Faridkot State. The 'Guru making' party had a weekly organ called the *Gurmukhi Akhbar* which was edited by Bhai Jhanda Singh. The complainant Baba Udai Singh and the said Jhanda Singh were both in receipt of pay from the Raja of Faridkot. The prosecution lasted for over a year in the defence of which Bhai Jawahir Singh took a lion's share besides subscribing Rs. 500 towards law expenses. In his cross examination Bhai Jhanda Singh stated before the District Judge, Mr. Harris, as under:

"I am still employed by Raja of Faridkot as a Gyani. . . . Exhibit 3, by accused, called *Gurmukhi Akhbar* is a paper of which I was once the Editor. On the opening page is printed *Under Authority of the Maharaja of Faridkot*."

The Editor of the *Khalsa Akhbar* and his party were called in the judgement as "very loyal" but the Editor was nevertheless fined Rs. 51 for defamation. An appeal was made and Mr. C.P. Burt, the Sessions Judge, delivered his Judgement on 30th April, 1888, acquitting the Editor of the *Khalsa Akhbar* and remitting the fine. In his judgement he said:

"In order to understand the theory of the prosecution and defence, it is necessary to explain that in 1886, one Nihal Singh wrote a book called the *Khurshid Khalsa* which was considered by Gurmukh Singh, Chief Secretary to the Khalsa Diwan, to contain passages disloyal to the British Government. He accordingly moved and procured his expulsion from the Khalsa Diwan. Bedi Khem Singh, the uncle of complainant and the Raja of Faridkot supported Nihal Singh and in consequence 6 or 7 Singh Sabhas withdrew from the Khalsa Diwan which had included some 36 or 37 Singh Sabhas. The organ of the 30 Singh Sabhas, to which Gurmukh Singh is still Chief Secretary, is the *Khalsa Akhbar* and that of the dissentient body is called *Gurmukhi Akhbar* and is edited by Bhai Jhanda Singh. The first copy of this paper was stated to have been issued under the authority of the Maharaja of Faridkot."

The end of this case which lasted over a year was practically the end of the Dhuleep Singh agitation.

5. Another instance may be quoted below:

The 'Nanak Panth Parkash Sabha,' Lahore, celebrated on 31st October, 1887, under the presidency of Bawa Udai Singh and supported by Bhai Badan Singh, Gyani of Faridkot, the 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Sabha in the Temple of Janam Asthan, Lahore. In this connection the following extract from the proceedings of the Singh Sabha of Lahore may be read:

*Para. 3.* - The Secretary (Bhai Jawahir Singh) informed the Committee that the seventh Anniversary meeting of the *Nanak Panth Parkash Sabha*, Lahore, was held by its members in the Temple of Janam Asthan on the night of 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1887. The whole of its management rested in the hands of Bawa Udai Singh the President. On that occasion the said Baba, it is to be regretted, placed a large photo of Dhuleep Singh by the side of the sacred *Granth* and afterwards illuminated it with lamps having taken it on to the well situate within the Temple premises. As the secretary himself with two other members of this committee happened to be there in time and observed the

objectionable proceedings going on in the Temple, he considered it necessary to demand an explanation from Bhai Jai Singh, die Priest in charge of the Temple. This was done early next morning; his written explanation is received and is now placed before this committee. The explanation was then read. The Secretary also stated that he had already submitted a formal intimation of the occurrence to Bhai Gurmukh Singh, the Chief Secretary of the Khalsa Diwan. The Executive Committee commended the Secretary for his timely notice and the steps taken and resolved to have the same recorded.”

6. The question of thus adoring the photo of Dhuleep Singh in so important a Sikh temple as the birth-place of Guru Ram Das, was, it is believed, taken up by the authorities with the party concerned. The moral effect of this was far reaching. The death of Maharaja Dhuleep Singh in October 1893 removed for ever the remotest hopes.

#### APPENDIX D (Vide Para 7)

On the 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arya Samaj held on 25th November, 1888, the late Pundit Guru Dutt, M.A. made certain uncalled for attacks on Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh which created a commotion in Lahore and other places. In defence a public meeting was organised and convened by Bhai Jawahir Singh in the premises of Baoli Sahib, Dabbi Bazar, Lahore, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1888, in which he delivered a lecture against the attitude of Arya Samaj. The following extract may be quoted:

“I exceedingly regret that the Arya Samaj has adopted this policy. What good do they hope to derive by putting such insulting words in the mouth of a graduate and compelling us to complain of their publicly? . . . .

I have had special relations with the Late Pundit Daya Nand Saraswati on which account he was very kind to me and he used to place his reliance in me. His letters to me which are yet in my possession bear testimony to this. But personal considerations have given way to national interests and compelled me to speak in this gathering. If such things are said as the Aryas do not expect from me, they should thank themselves for it, as it is due to their own improper proceedings that I and my friends here are obliged to make a reply to their attacks. . . . Equity does not permit us to let the Founder of the Arya Samaj to be exalted at the expense of the Sikh Gurus.”

This speech at a public meeting and the exposure of the policy of the Arya Samaj made the Samajists bitterly against Bhai Jawahir Singh.

The Bhai then published three books on the Arya Samaj and sent copies thereof to H.H. the Maharana of Oodeypur who is regarded as the head of all the Arya Samajes in India. In return, he received the Maharana’s thanks and a set of valuable books published in that State. These books are now placed in the Khalsa College Library at Amritsar.

#### APPENDIX E

*Thoughts on Duty:* The following is the Review by the *Homeward Mail*, dated 16th November, 1889 (page 1451):

“A really learned and prudent exposition of Sikh doctrine has been this year made by an earnest disciple, which has published for general information by the Society before whom it was laid. It is written in Urdu with numerous citations from the sacred books of the Sikhs written in Punjabi, which attests throughout the writer’s command of the literature he essays to expound. Unfortunately there are very few people who make the Punjabi language a serious study, and this has induced the author to supplement his citation from the sacred canon with a running commentary in Urdu.

“He begins his book with a discussion of the attributes of the Deity as generally acknowledged and show how a belief and reliance on those attributes is inculcated in the Sikh Scriptures. He then tells the Sikh confession of faith (page 71) and the expansions and explanations of that confession by the great masters of the faith. In the course of this it is incidentally shown that the adoration paid to the ‘Guru’ which Europeans generally ascribe to the early teachers of Sikhism is really intended for the Deity himself, he being the *Sat* ‘Guru’ or ‘true Guru’. It is in fact an expression used authentically to the Hindu use of the word Guru. The Hindus pay extravagant reverence to the private teacher, or Guru, who imparts to them the sacred mantra, or charm, which is to console them in life and be their passport to future bliss. The adoration offered to those pampered creatures is different little from that offered to the Creator, it was the object of the Sikh teachers to point out that the ‘true Guru’ was the Deity himself, not that the true Guru was the head of the Sikh fraternity, and those among the Hindus were imposers. The author shows throughout that Sikhism is an intellectual form of faith deserving the heartfelt devotion of its disciples, and the respect of mankind. In doing this he has done a good work, and is materially assisting in giving the Sikhs the high position they deserve both in India and the world.”

#### APPENDIX F (Vide para 10)

On the Jubilee of Her late Majesty, Bhai Jawahir Singh presented to, and read the Khalsa Diwan Address before His Honour Sir Charles Aitchison, on 16th February, 1887. The following sentence is quoted therefrom:

“What we have done in the past, we promise to do in the future; and if ever again the peace of Your Majesty’s dominions is threatened Your Majesty can count on us as soldiers and allies whose strength and loyalty have been proved in many a desperate engagements and critical moment. We pray Your Majesty to bear us in your memory and assist us *who are still behind hand in education and struggling against ancient prejudices.*”

The Address was graciously accepted by Her Majesty, *vide* Mr. J.P. Hewett’s letter No. 1440, dated 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1888.

2. Bhai Jawahir Singh approached H. E. Lord Dufferin in November 1888 and read the Khalsa Diwan Farewell Address to his excellency in the Government House, Lahore. In this connection, the following extract from a long article in the *Alien’s Indian Mail*, dated 11<sup>th</sup> March, 1889, page 228, may be quoted:

“An event of considerable significance occurred at Lahore last November which appears inclined to slumber unobserved until its results force themselves on general attention. The event to which allusion is made is the presentation of the Farewell Address to Lord Dufferin by a Deputation

from the Khalsa Diwan of the Punjab. 'This powerful Body represents the Sikh community of India, and the gentlemen who presented the Address may fairly claim to represent the Sikh both as a religion and as a nation. . . . *The gist of their demand is that they be no longer confounded with Hindus but treated in all respects as a separate community. They desire proper supply of village schools and that the language of the Panjab should be the basis of education, with due provision for the subsequent acquisition of English and high scholarship. A fair proportion of official and military appointments is asked for Sikhs suited to fill them, and it is not unreasonably maintained that the natives of this large Province should have the lion's share of their own loaves and fishes.*'

In reply to this Address the Deputation virtually secured from His Excellency *a promise for help in the cause of the Sikh education.* Sir James Lyall also kindly promised to help in the matter.

3. Bhai Jawahir Singh read the Khalsa Diwan welcome Address to sir Dennis Fitzpatrick in the Lawrence Hall, Lahore, on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1892. He had similarly read a welcome Address to Sir James Lyall five years before. A paragraph is quoted from the 1892 Address:

But it is very unfortunate for them (Sikhs) that they *did not realise the full benefit of education and enlightenment which the Government provided for all classes of its subjects, one of the reasons being that the majority of them lived far from centres of education, and that primary education was not imparted through their mother-tongue.* In other parts of India the vernaculars of the respective provinces are used as the media of instruction, but here in Panjab the mother-tongue of the people is not sufficiently encouraged, and consequently the education of the masses is in a backward state."

4. Bhai Jawahir Singh acted as Sikh Secretary to the committee of Reception to H. E. Lord Roberts formed at Lahore in December 1892, and he read the Sikh Address to His Excellency in the Jubilee Town Hall at a large gathering held early in January 1893.

5. Bhai Jawahir Singh read the Welcome Address of the Khalsa Diwan to Sir Mackworth Young on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1897, in the Lawrence Hall, Lahore.

6. Shortly afterwards Bhai Jawahir Singh presented the General Sikh Address to H. E. Lord Elgin, at Simla on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1897, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Her Late Majesty.

In his letter No. 228 S., dated 10th June, 1897, the Hon'ble Mr. Dane wrote to the Bhai who was Secretary to the Deputation as under:

"I am to add that as the Address purports to be from Princes, Chiefs and people of the Panjab, it would be well if possible to have it signed by some at any rate of the Sikh Princes."

Accordingly Bhai Jawahir Singh obtained the signatures of Maharaja Rajinder Singh of Patiala, Raja Hira Singh of Nabha and Raja Ranbir Singh of Sangrur. The Raja of Kapurthala being then in London, the signature of Sardar Bhagat Singh, C.I.E., Prime Minister, was obtained. The Raja of Faridkot had authorised his name to be put on the Address, but Mr. Dane in letter No. 407 S. of 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1901, informed the Bhai that his Casket and Address had already been sent to the Government of India, and as the Raja of Faridkot had sent in a separate Address, he thought, he (Bhai Jawahir Singh) would hardly think it necessary to add his name to the General Khalsa Address.



7. On 5th April 1899, Bhai Jawahir Singh read the Khalsa Diwan Address to His Excellency Lord Curzon in the Government House, Lahore. In this Address *the Government was asked to encourage the publication of the new translation in English of the Sikh Scriptures.*

(N.B. - About this time Bhai Jawahir Singh was requested by a Sikh Prince to settle the terms of publication of the translation by Mr. Macauliffe of the sacred books of the Sikhs. The Bhai wrote to the author accordingly and received in reply a letter, dated 19th January, 1899, in which it was said:

“I should be glad if you, as one of the foremost among the enlightened Sikhs, would kindly lend your aid in obtaining proper remuneration for my labours.”

8. At the request of certain representative Sikhs, Bhai Jawahir Singh prepared the Coronation Address in the name of the whole of the Sikh community as was done by him in respect to the Diamond Jubilee Address in 1897, but in obedience to the wish of the Punjab Government as conveyed in Mr. Burton's D.O. of 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1902, to Mr. Younghusband, the Coronation Address was altered and reprinted in the name of Khalsa Diwan which body was subsequently asked to, and did adopt it.

#### APPENDIX G (Vide para II)

That Bhai Jawahir Singh is one of the original promoters of the Khalsa College cannot be doubted for a moment. Article 16 of the Fundamental Rules of the Khalsa College records his name as the *first* among the original promoters of the institution. Also read Editorial note in the *Simla News*, dated 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1890, which ran as under: “. . . the movement originated with Sir Atar Singh of Bhadaur and Sardars Jawahir Singh and Gurmukh Singh. The future locality for this institution is now under consideration of Government.”

2. At the annual meeting of the Khalsa College Council held on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1897, Bhai Jawahir Singh asked the Council to accept his resignation and to appoint another person in his place, he having held the office for about five years. The resignation was not accepted, *vide* following extract from the proceeding:

“Sardar Dharm Singh suggested that since the Secretary's work was very important and laborious the Council may request the present Secretary to continue to act in his office. On this almost all the members present spoke with one voice and compelled the Secretary to withdraw his resignation. The President (Sir William H. Rattigan) also spoke favourably on the satisfactory way in which the present Secretary had done his work and expressed his hope that the Secretary will comply with the wishes of the Council and withdraw his resignation.

Bhai Jawahir Singh withdraw his resignation accordingly.

3. Sir William Rattigan, the Life-President of the Khalsa College Council, wrote to Bhai Jawahir Singh a letter from Butler's Court, Beaconsfield, Bucks, on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1899, in which he said:

“I am sure the friends of institution owe you a deep debt of gratitude for the zealous and successful manner in which you have conducted the duties of an unpaid Secretary. You must not be disheartened if some captious critics find occasional fault. This is what one has to put up with for the sake of a cause, one has to hear, and I hope you will continue to work with the same singleness of purpose. The Vice-President will, I am sure, help you in my absence, and I rejoice that so reliable a man holds his high office.”

6. Three years elapsed and Bhai Jawahir Singh having worked for about 14 years as Honorary Secretary to the Khalsa College Council, again submitted his resignation to the Acting president, Mr. H.A.B. Rattigan. In reply, Mr. Rattigan wrote to the Bhai on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1902, as under:

“As regards your resignation of the Secretaryship, I need hardly tell you, how greatly I value all the immense services you have done to the Khalsa College and School and how deeply indebted I am to you for the ready assistance which you have always rendered me personally. I really do not know how I could possibly have got in without that help so generously and promptly given whenever asked for, no matter at what sacrifice to yourself. But I feel that I cannot in justice to yourself ask you to continue making such sacrifices, and I, therefore, though with the greatest regret reluctantly accept your resignation. I might perhaps, have ventured to beg you to reconsider the matter, had it not been that I expect the duties of the Secretary will be merely clerical once the new Committee (of which, of course you *must* be a member) is appointed. I hope that with your usual kindness you will not mind my asking you to retain the Secretaryship until the meeting of the Council.”

(N. B. - At the urgent request of the European members present at the meeting of the Council held subsequently on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1902, the Bhai again agreed to, and did withdraw his resignation)

7. On 16th March, 1902, Mr. Rattigan wrote to Bhai Jawahir Singh as under:

8. Bhai Jawahir Singh finally resigned the Secretaryship of the Khalsa College Council in 1906, in view of the very unsatisfactory working of the ‘Managing Committee’ which had been formed some time ago as a temporary measure. He also resigned membership of the Managing Committee but not of the College Council. Shortly afterwards, the Hon’ble Mr. Rattigan felt compelled to resign the Presidentship on account of certain circumstances which arose in the College leading to unwise and undesirable agitation, and the Ruling Chiefs of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot have all withdrawn their support, financial and moral, till the management of the College is once again placed on a satisfactory footing.

Footnotes:

1. From a *Brief Note on Bhai Jawahir Singh*, written in about 1907.
2. Bhai Jawahir Singh died on May 14, 1910.

**THE SIKH KANYA MAHAVIDYALA FEROZEPORE<sup>1</sup>**  
**SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR**

The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, or the Chief Sikh Girls School at Ferozepore is, a typical Sikh educational institution. It was born out of the labours of a single person and the lively interest which the community took in the enterprise of that person. If one could understand how this institution grew up, it would not be difficult to know how so many other Sikh schools, for boys and girls, have sprung up all over the Punjab during the last thirty years or so. Below is given a short study of the founder of the institution and of the institution itself.

I

I had heard much of the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala at Ferozepore, and more about its founder, Bhai Takhat Singh. When the nation conferred on him the proud title (*Zinda Shahid*), the 'Living Martyr' I felt very curious about him. What sort of man he is and what is his work that has earned for him such distinction? Echoes of his work continued to reach my ears almost every year and the longing to see his institution waxed stronger and stronger. Yet I could gather no courage to go to Ferozepore. There was the fancy:

"Be Yarrow stream, unseen, unknown:

It must or we shall true it:

We have a vision of our own,

Ah why should we undo it?

The treasured dreams of time long past,

We will keep them, winsome Marrow;

For when we're there, although 'tis fair,

'twil be another Yarrow!"

I had my dreams and visions about this Yarrow of knowledge, and I was loth to break these beautiful images, the children of fancy. But the "winsome Marrow" the spirit of curiosity in me still persisted, and after a struggle of five years between going and not going, I finally decided to make a pilgrimage to this temple of learning.

On alighting from the train at Ferozepore, I was received by two co-workers of Bhai Takhat Singh, one a young man of fair promise, an old acquaintance of mine, the other a middle aged, strong Sikh of large eyes and well grown beard.

In a rickety conveyance, we started on the road to our destination. In the way I got a chance to pay homage to the memory of the heroes of Saragarhi. The memorial is a chaste specimen of the Sikh-Moghul art, and commands a lovely view amidst well laid lawns and fresh flower beds. This was a good prelude to the visit to come, a kind of contrast. The monument was a visible expression of the great deeds of Sikhs in the field of battle; the monument I was going to see was to be an effort to achieve similar glory in the field of civil life.

As we reached near the institution, where flowed the water that brightens the intellect, a sort, of confusion and embarrassment grew strong in my mind. I felt again afraid lest the image of my own creation should perish before the sordid realities of life. I was afraid that the glorious edifice, built by a fond imagination in idle hours, might fall to pieces. My heart palpitated, and the whole frame shuddered at the idea of this ruin and devastation. I realised why the great poet was reluctant

to go to Yarrow, and refused the earnest request of his 'True-love even to make her "sigh for sorrow". After all it may be. . . .

" . . . . . a river bare  
That glides the dark hills under,  
There are a thousand such elsewhere  
As worthy of your wonder."

But all these fears were groundless. I did not lose my vision, simply it changed to something that was more full of life, and even more worthy of attention, because there was no haziness or an atmosphere of uncertainty about it. When I entered the simple walls that grid like a belt the whole of the school compound, I once more thought with the visitor to Yarrow,

"But thou that didst appear so fair  
To fond imagination  
Dost rival in the light of day.  
Her delicate creation:  
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,  
A softness still and holy:  
The grace of forest charms decayed,  
And pastoral melancholy."

It was, indeed, very unfortunate that I did not come earlier to the place. The joy, the peace, the charm that I felt in that sacred place, and that now has become a part of my life, had, I felt sorry, remained so long away from me. I saw there the worker and the work in their glory, both embodiments of the spirit of Sikhism. I grasped for the first time in my life how Sikhs of old could work wonders with meagre material, and against all unfavourable circumstances. I learnt here how a man could become a martyr even in his life, how by sheer hard, honest work a crown of thorns could be turned into a golden chaplet.

I was at my wit's end to decide whom to admire most, the work or the worker. The difficulty was great as it is not possible to disassociate one from the other. I found the 'Living Martyr', all humility, courtesy, painstaking, persevering and selfless. I found his work solid, uplifting, of far-reaching consequence, and almost unprecedented.

When I stepped in the office room, Bhai Sahib was not there. A little later, he came up from a side door, and I respectfully bowed to greet him. An ordinary man of middle height, very simply dressed, stood before me. The only sign of superiority lay in his firm gait. But if you looked more attentively on his face, you could find the man within slowly coming out on the surface. The small deep eyes sparkled with a lustre that is so prominent in some of the portraits of Napoleon. The general contour of his face was well set; it was expressive of energy and determination.

I was told that owing to a heavy shower, the Boarding House was not in a ship-shape condition. But I was prepared for it. A bell was rung and I stood up. A few minutes later, I found myself in a corner of a big courtyard with well planned rooms on all sides. The students, junior and senior, lined it in front of the doors on two sides; the flashing sheet of water of last night's rain stood between us. The temporary tank produced a pretty effect by reflecting in it the long rows of the students and the dignified buildings that stood behind them. The multi-coloured dresses of the girls gave an impression of wild flower beds on the banks of some lake in the hills.

The students greeted us like all Sikh girls; the harmonious welcome voices rose and fell like the sweet notes of an organ in some ancient cathedral. It was then all hush and silence. The modest eyes of the girls were fixed on the ground; they stood there like goddesses of old, happy and care-free.

I was then taken round the bed rooms; every thing was in its proper place; order and cleanliness were visible on every side. The walls were decorated with photographs connected with the history of the institution; here and there some mottoes were also tastefully displayed. Kitchens, specially in India, remain very dirty ever after the greatest care of the house-wife; but here even this department was not behind any other place in the matter of tidy appearance. Cups, tumblers, and dishes were arranged in geometrical patterns; and there was no sign of waste or rubbish anywhere. Near the entrance was the room of the lady superintendent, Mrs. Takhat Singh. Among other pictures, it had on its walls the Italian photogravures depicting different seasons. What a difference between these ladies of the wild woods and the little girls I saw in the quadrangle.

There were also in one of the rooms, some photos of Bibi Harnam Kaur, the foundress of this institution. In one picture she lay on her death bed with the pupils standing around her to bid her the last farewell. In another, Bhai Sahib was seen calmly sitting by the side of his dead wife, her children sitting around with suppressed emotions bubbling up in their little hearts. I was now introduced to an orphan girl. When a babe, she was entrusted by some village folk to Bibi Hamam Kaur's care. The deceased lady had at that time a child of her own on the breast. On the arrival of his starved waif, the charitable Bibi brought it up on her own milk, and trusted her own baby to the milk from the market. This orphan stands weeping in the photo, and now she stood weeping before me. The pathos of the story was still on her innocent face; the scene will not easily go out of my memory.

## II

I had my own ideas about the education of the Indian girls and about their future in the development of their country. I had also my ideas about the great part which the woman of the coming age had to play in the onward march of humanity: I wished to know what Bhai Sahib thought these questions; he was directly connected with an institution which afforded unique opportunities as regards observation of the capabilities of Indian woman; his opinions must be valuable. I also wished to know something more of general interest about the institution. Bhai Sahib was very kind in replying to my queries, and the courteous and frank manner in which he treated some of my questions will be remembered by me for a long time.

"Bhai Sahib," I asked, "What is your ambition in life?"

"To serve the public to the best of my ability," was the prompt reply. He added, "Man's main duty is to serve other men. One who has no idea of service does not deserve to be called a man. I am ready to suffer any trouble while walking on the path of righteousness. Jail, death, even dishonour, would not keep me back from the true course."

"What is your ideal of an educated girl?" was the next question.

"An educated girl should prove of the greatest use to the house. She ought to be religious and chaste, and wholly and solely devoted to the service of her husband and children. Whenever I get occasion, I impress these lessons on the minds of the girls in my charge. Simplicity is another virtue on which I lay equal emphasis."

“How far have you succeeded in realising that ideal?”

“On the whole, I have been very successful. There have been some black sheep too, especially among those grown up girls who are forced to come here against their will.”

“Is there any opposition to your work?”

“There is no opposition worth the name. Naturally there are some jealous persons who try to create misunderstandings in the public mind. But they have not succeeded to any appreciable degree.”

Here Bhai Sahib related the story of one of their own missionaries, whom, on account of paucity of funds, he could not give promotion according to his wishes, and who thereupon had made it his duty to give a bad name to the Vidyala and the workers.

“Is the Sikh community helping you quite to your satisfaction?” “My brethren have helped me more than they have helped any single man before. It is quite another thing that the institution is still under debt.”

“Then why this debt?”

“The expenses are very high. We have no permanent grant, and no fees are levied. Other institutions are mainly supported by the income from fees. Sikhs generally are too poor to afford to pay fees for the education of their children. The imposition of fees will greatly check their progress in this direction. Government grant is not accepted, because it would deprive us of our liberty in many ways. It would require to have a special staff of teachers and many other things which we are not in a position to afford. Also if any grant is accepted, the general public becomes careless in its support. When the late lamented Maharaja Hira Singh Sahib of Nabha extended his helping hand towards this institution, public subscriptions were generally stopped; it was wrongly believed that such a help was sufficient for the whole work.”

“Is it true that this recurring deficit in your budget is due to the fact that there is no committee to support you?”

“The formation of a committee may bring more money, though I doubt if the public would help me in the same manner in which they have helped in the past. Anyhow, I would not be able to work under a committee. The bitter experience I have had in connection with the local Singh Sabha, had taught me this stem lesson. These committee people neither work themselves nor would allow others to work. They waste time on petty affairs; sometimes their interference becomes simply intolerable for a true worker.”

“Will the formation of a committee improve the financial condition of the Vidyala to any degree?” I again asked from this follower of Carlyle, who believed more in man and his work than in any set of assemblies composed of flunkies and dilettantes.

“In the present case it won’t. I shall not be able to work.”

“What do you think is the best way to make the institution self-supporting and almost complete in all necessary details?”

“My main stay is my FAITH IN GOD. I shall put my full exertions in collecting subscriptions from the public after some local work has been completed. I won’t mind begging like an ordinary beggar.”

“How long would it take to reach your ideal for this institution?”

“If only the present speed is maintained, it should take three generations to complete this work. Much progress could be made even in my life if the Sikh Chiefs and gentry were to take some more interest in this work. Liberal grants from them could do more than is possible otherwise. They can appoint a committee to see that the donations given by them are not spent in any objectionable manner. But I do not care much for complete success in my life. This entirely depends on the Guru’s will. My sole aim is to work, and to work honestly for my brethren; let the end be what it may. Even after my death the work shall continue. There are other men like Bhai Vir Singh who are thoroughly competent to do all that is needed.”

I changed the topic and asked Bhai Sahib if he was hopeful about the progress of the Sikhs in the field of female education. He said he was very hopeful about it. According to the latest census report, the Sikhs were foremost amongst the Indian communities as far as the percentage amongst them of the educated women was concerned.

“What is your opinion about the intelligence of the Sikh girls?” “They are not behind girls of any other community. Those coming from the rural districts are rather dull of understanding. At the same time they are more persevering than their sisters living in the large towns; after some little time when their rustic scales fall off, they too become acute and clever.”

“Are they sharp of understanding?”

“Their imitative faculty is very sharp, though they lack in originality.”

“How do they compare with boys in this respect?”

“Very favourably. Give them full chance and they would come up to the standard of boys very easily. In examination they are as successful as their brothers, though they have also to learn many things more than boys; they have also to learn household work, care of the children and such other subjects. The drawback is that the social customs of this country do not give them opportunity for the cultivation of higher faculties.”

“Have you had any difficulty in managing the grown up girls?”

“Unmarried grown up girls do not give any trouble; but it is difficult to satisfactorily arrange for the married girls. Such girls shirk work and do not like discipline. They are found to be too old for the school routine. Nor is their heart in the business. If kept separate from younger girls they might be better. We cannot afford to have separate classes for them. Moreover I do not believe in a forced manner of education. Many people who get tired of their wives send them out here, as if it were a sort of an asylum. No success is possible in such cases. A Sikh graduate who is connected with one of our national institutions, sent a few days back, his wife here, against her will, so that she might prove a help to him in his work. But the heart of the lady was not in education; she made matters so difficult for us by pretending illness that we had to despatch her back. It is indeed difficult to teach A, B, C to girls who are on the wrong side of twenty.”

### III

“What is in your opinion the ideal of life for an average Indian girl?”

“She has no ideals. Here in India circumstances are not very favourable to the growth of individual ability. She cannot become what she would like herself to be. My young child has special aptitude for painting; in another country she would become a great painter; but here we have to follow a routine where inclination towards special Subjects is crushed to waste.”

“Do our girls long for freedom of life?”

“It depends upon the society they are moving in. They themselves are quite blank in this respect; they learn to think in the manner they are taught to think. They do require some one to depend upon. Sometimes because of their helplessness, it appears to me that like other domestic animal man has perhaps trained them for his own use.”

“Have they any tendency to work their fate quite independently of their husbands?”

“Not like European suffragists. They are too mild to play that role.”

“Do you discourage or encourage such spirit for freedom?”

“I check down all such ideas. I am against *parda*, but I am also against too much freedom of the western type. I have heard from army of my European friends about the evils of the new feminine movement in England and on the Continent.”

“What do you think about the health of the girls under your charge?”

“It is very good, I am well satisfied about it.”

“Do the Indian girls feel strong enough to take up sterner duties of life outside the home sphere?”

“Yes. They can work as hard as any man. In Malwa I have seen Sikh ladies doing everything except ploughing. In weight-lifting they are hardly surpassed by their brothers. Generally our women do not get sufficient opportunity for work; this disuse of their limbs greatly weakens them. Sedentary habits also have a degenerating effect upon their physique.”

“Do your girls take any interest in games?”

“They do not take interest in hockey or football; these games, I think, are harmful to their constitution. Lighter sort of recreation as tennis, racing, etc., is not objected to.”

“Does the average girl become vain by little education?”

“They do sometimes put on airs, specially when sitting among the uneducated, it is natural. Men also used to do the same when education was not such a common thing as it is today in the big towns.”

“What is the net value of education imparted in a modem girl school in India?”

“It is very little value. The present system should be radically changed. More useful subjects should occupy greater importance than at present.”

“Does an educated girl become a real help to the house-hold?”

“Yes. She does, though in a different sense from what is the case with their uneducated sisters.”

“What about the complaint that the educated girl shirks ordinary duties?”

“This complaint is due to some misunderstanding. A well educated girl who could become more useful in other spheres of life should not be expected to do the work which could be safely entrusted to menials.”

“Is there any necessity for them to work like menials?”



“When there be no other work for them, they shall have to do it. Men generally do not allow them to work outside the house. They do not wish them to work even as teachers.”

“Would they not prove of higher use in the scheme of life by working in the higher sphere?”

“They must be brought up to take their full share in life and work. They will soon realise their responsibilities if only men were to allow them to do so.”

“Would they be more productive of happiness when they are educated like men?”

“Their education is sure to increase the happiness of man-kind in general.”

“What is the age when an Indian girl generally wishes to be married?”

“She has not any opinion of her own in the matter. As she sees others around her, her desires are moulded accordingly. We have grown up girls, away from married society, who have never thought of the question.”

“Has education in any way materially raised the marriage age of an Indian girl?”

“It has to some extent. There are very few child marriages in educated families.”

“Does education help an Indian girl in securing a better husband?”

“The poor thing has nothing to do with it. It all depends on the choice of her parents.”

“You had a long tour in connection with raising of funds for your institution; how did you like it?”

“Yes, I had to collect fifty thousand rupees in this way. It was a very troublesome business. Near Bangkok and Singapore, we had no food for two days. For four days in the ship, we had to say our prayers while lying down on our backs. I enjoyed it only in so far that it was an ennobling work. When we got the money we forgot all our privations. The institution was benefited by it also indirectly. The tour brought it to the public notice very prominently.”

“Did you find in this tour the Sikhs enthusiastic about female education?”

“Yes, they seemed very earnest about it. We were every where very cordially received.”

“Is there any prejudice against female education still left amongst the Sikhs?”

“Uneducated people have no prejudice against female education, though they have not the means for it. But there are some educated persons who wish to play the reactionary. Such persons are in favour of having educated daughters-in-law, though they do not favour education of their own daughters. There are scarcely five per cent Sikhs of this strange and selfish type.”

“How do the educational institutions like outward interference?”

“Real workers would not welcome any interference in their internal affairs. They have to look to many other things of which the outsiders are generally ignorant though independent suggestions should be very diligently carried out as far as these be practicable.”

“Had there been any serious trouble in your institution between internal and external authorities?”

“Never of any importance; only in the beginning there was some little misunderstanding.”

“What is your success due to?”

“Because I have faith in the Guru. My motto is:  
“The food should not fall short  
The guest should not turn back  
The wealth should not amass  
The business should not slack.’

As we do not keep much with us, we have always to look for public support which can be secured only by good hard work. This keeps us always on the alert. Guru has always helped us in every crisis; so, we hope, he will always do in the future. Difficulties and troubles have made the institution what it is at present. It is all the work of God.”

It is the faith of this man in his work and God that has given the Sikh community this wonderful institution. The deep insight he possesses in the character of our girls, has placed his work on a higher level than is generally seen in this country. He has a healthy pride in what he has achieved; nobody who has seen him working would grudge him this self-satisfaction.

#### IV

So far I had seen only the Boarding House, and that too only a temporary one. I had yet to see the school which, for want of its own building, occupies the half finished building of the permanent Boarding House. It is a palatial structure and when complete would bring credit to the whole Sikh community. We entered from a side wing, and found four senior girls deep in their studies. They were well built; they were dressed in a simple manner; their faces beamed with intelligence; but they were more serious than the boys of that age; they were shy, very shy. Like the beautiful shining creatures that even when you touch them with a light straw, drop down inert, these daughters of the Sikh warriors stood confused before members of the other sex. The days of slavery are not yet over in the east; and I realised what a time it would take to uplift this veil of spurious civilisation from the mental horizon of a girl in the Orient.

I was asked to put some questions. I enquired of an ordinary fact connected with Sikh history. To my great pleasure, I found that all of them knew it; but the answer came out so reluctantly that I thought it cruel to ask anything more.

As I proceeded onward to other classes the students increased in number. In another room, Bhai Sahib's own daughter entertained us with an impressive rendering of ‘Casablanca’, the favourite of all obedient boys and girls.

This class was working with the worthy headmaster of the institution. He is a young man, but just like his sisters, he is simple, delicate, devoted and unassuming. There were other classes under the control of elderly ladies. Here too the discipline was very efficiently maintained. The little girls of the infant class, with their huge writing boards, were as orderly and respectful as the grown-up girls of senior classes. Then there were the ladies of the training class. The Vidyala itself showed what a lack of lady teachers there was. This new departure will greatly strengthen the hands of the local managers in this respect, and also help the schools in other towns. It is a useful outlet for the energies of widows and other ladies who are endowed with an ambition for a career.

The building is very strongly constructed. The foundations are sunk broad to meet any emergency. The materials are free from cheap mixtures; due care is paid to the permanent value of

all articles. At in othe things, so in this Bhai Sahib is very thorough in details. He is not professional, but his knowledge in practical engineering will let him pass as a man in the line.

One instance here of his love for the institution is worthy of being related. While showing us round the buildings, he found one small projection in a wall broken. He gathered the stones that lay on the ground, put them again on their proper place and looked at the little ruin as a mother looks at her wounded child. He was really grieved to see even such an ordinary disfigurement of the building. A man who has laboured hard for a thing cannot feel otherwise.

In this pilgrimage of mine, I should also make mention of Bibi Agya Kaur, the lady Superintendent and worthy consort of Bhai Sahib. I had my morning meals at her house. To me she was a personification of sisterly love and service, and a model of Simplicity. During a great part of my visit, Bhai Vir Singh and Babu Tek Singh, Bhai Sahib's chief assistants, were also with me and both of them were always kind to let me know all that I desired to know. They were good products of Bhai Sahib's noble example and worthy of the trust that is reposed in them.

I visited the institution in 1915 A.D. after twenty-three years of its existence; it was founded in 1892 A.D. The foundation of the Boarding House was laid only in 1904 A.D. From 1908 to 1914 it had turned out 1,608 scholars, and 312 more were still being educated in last December. Sixty-six students had up to the time passed from this institution the Middle school examination of the Punjab University; one had passed Budhiman examination and one Matriculation. In the last two classes there were three and four students respectively to appear in that year's examination.

The property of the whole Vidyala was worth about two lacs of rupees and was under the direct charge of the 'Living Martyr.' He was helped by a competent staff of forty-five persons belonging to both sexes. There were nineteen teachers, eleven male and eight female; three clerks, four musicians, seven preachers, one doctor and eleven others who had to perform minor duties.

When we consider that this had sprung up from a name-sake of a school in Ferozepur which had Bhai Takhat Singh and his late lamented wife, Harnam Kaur, as its only teacher, and a thatched, dripping house for its building, with three students on its rolls, the present development seemed wonderful indeed.

I left this temple dedicated to the goddess of education with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. I was pleased after all to have seen this noble work with my own eyes; but I was sorry that still much was to be done, much more than had been done so far. This was only a beginning; according to the Founder's words, it were to take three generations more to complete it. Besides the institution was under debt, head and shoulders. The management could not work wholeheartedly because their attention was often distracted by scarcity of funds. There seemed no one who could remove this nightmare from their minds.

Who could see the future? I was satisfied and had the best day's reward. I don't remember to have passed a day more usefully and in better company. The man and his work was a sort of inspiration to me and the 'genuine image,' of the Vidyala, will for ever dwell with me to heighten joy and cheer the sorrowful hours of my life.

Footnotes:

1. *The Sikh Studies*. Lahore, 1937, pp. 140-61.

## GIRLS' EDUCATION IN THE PANJAB<sup>1</sup>

### SANAULLAH KHAN

Before the advent of the British Rule, education among Punjabee women of the higher castes of Hindus, the better Moslems and all orders of Sikhs was purely religious. The system of education was confined to their acquiring the principal tenets of their respective religions. Only a small section of the female population was educated to the modest requirements of household life. Among the Hindus the education of girls was entirely domestic. Early marriage had already become the custom and the only education which a girl received was one which fitted her to fulfil the duties of the household of her husband. She was sometime acquainted with something of the vast mythological stories and folklore, handed down from ancient times.

As to the education of the Moslem girls it was as much restricted among the Moslems as among the Hindus. The *Purdah* system which shut up in seclusion all Moslem women except young girls, made their education a matter of great difficulty, even when it may have been desired. However, some little girls were taught with boys but their leaving school at a very early age prevented their education being carried very far. It was purely limited to the reading of the Holy *Quran*. They received education at the hand of Mullahs of mosques. Sometimes old widows opened such schools in their houses.

The education of a Sikh girl was confined to the study of the *Granth Sahib* the memorising of *Japji*. Gurmukhi was taught by *Bhais* of Dharmshalas.

After the annexation of the Province and the organisation of the Department, there appeared to be some practical difficulties in the way of extending the opportunities of education to girls. Popular prejudices of social conservatism were powerful in operation and likely to damp the energies of Government. The authorities could not, therefore, direct their attention to the subject until many years after they had adopted definite measures for the education of boys.

The first Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Arnold, writes, "When the Department was first organised it was proposed to let the question of female schools stand over till the ordinary establishments were well set on foot." But the time arrived when the Government grew far above the prejudices of the people. The need for educating girls was badly felt. The experiment had been successfully tried in the United Provinces owing to the enthusiasm of a certain Gokal Singh, a Deputy Inspector.<sup>2</sup> The accounts of the efforts made in the United Provinces soon reached the Educational authorities in the Punjab who commenced operations by impressing upon the people the importance of teaching their daughters as well as their sons. The first Girls school was opened at Rawalpindi under the auspices of Mr. Browne, Inspector of schools, Rawalpindi Division, in December 1856. By the close of the year, 17 schools had been established and the total number of girls attending them was 306 or 18 per school. Of the whole number 296 were Moslems and only 10 Hindus. The nomination of the teachers was at first left to the people of the place. These schools were often inspected by the Deputy Inspectors in company with a few of the respectable inhabitants of the place. But the people, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the Government did not feel the need of education for their daughters to any appreciable degree. It was now expected that girls education would surely progress rapidly, circumscribed only by the limitation of funds.

In 1863-64, a scheme was proposed for training governesses and placing them in families of the upper classes of Indian society at Lahore and Amritsar, but this scheme was afterwards changed, for it was found that the women under instruction had domestic cares and duties. The history of girls education would remain incomplete if the efforts of one Bawa Khem Singh Bedi be not mentioned. He rendered meritorious services to the country by stirring up people to educate their daughters.

It was year 1865-66 when for the first time three training schools for women vernacular teachers were started.

The tables show that there was a great collapse at the end of this period. In fact when the movement in favour of girls education commenced, a large number of schools were started without any guarantee of continuance of funds for their support or that any real instruction would be given in them. Hence many schools were abolished either on account of failure of funds or because it had been proved that nothing was taught in them.

By the year 1875, the remaining number of Government and private schools had come to rest on a more or less stable basis. This was the period of progress. Five Normal Schools had been opened during the previous years which supplied women teachers and in consequence resulted in the increase of these schools.

In fact girls education made every little progress in the Punjab. Many causes were still working which stood considerably in the way of bringing about the desired result of this new experiment. The main defects were not so much the action or inaction of the ruling power as the customs of the people themselves - apathy of the people towards girls education owing to social and religious conservatism, the custom of early marriages and domestic cares and duties.

It was the year 1883 when Mrs. Steel was informally appointed to inspect and supervise these girls' schools. She was a very capable lady who had a sound knowledge and experience of girls education. Her services to the cause of female education were commended.

During the year 1885, Miss Waunton of the C.M.S. schools and Mrs. Rodgers of the Municipal Schools at Amritsar generally assisted the Department by inspecting and reporting on the girls schools in Delhi, Lahore, Gujranwala, Ludhiana, Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts. The need of an independent Lady Inspector of Indian girls' schools was keenly felt, but the financial position did not allow it. There were 193 Primary schools for girls and the total expenditure on these schools amounted to Rs. 94,331 in 1886. The results attained at the public examinations by girls furnished evidence that some progress was being made, though their education was still in a backward state. It was noticed that there was no Normal school for girls until the year 1886, which could supply competent teachers and until there was a supply of women teachers possessing the necessary qualifications there could be no really good Primary schools for girls except those taught by European ladies, or by men.

The want of competent women teachers impeded the progress of girls primary education and every reasonable inducement was afforded to girls to qualify up to the required standard. The efforts of Miss Greenfield and Miss Anderson of Ludhiana were greatly appreciated in this connection. The measures introduced during the year 1885 for the improvement of girls education had an undoubted effect in arousing an interest in the subject; and in stimulating the exertions both

of scholars and of teachers. The award of prizes to girls who distinguished themselves, of scholarships on the results of the Upper and Lower Primary examinations and of instruction grants to teachers in Board schools in accordance with the new rules, was systematically carried out. The most important feature of year 1888 was the formal appointment of a Lady Inspectress of Schools, Miss F.A. Francis. She did a great deal for the education of girls. She had a sound knowledge of the Punjabi language, and was very sympathetic to girls. But the immediate prospects of girls' education were not brilliant though it was hoped that with time and patience the prejudice and apathy of the people would be-dispelled.

As recommended by the Indian Education Commission of 1884, to which reference has already been made in the previous chapter, the course of studies in primary school both for boys and for girls had been revised in 1889 and simplified. Much attention had been given during these years to the improvement of girls' education. The two great obstacles were the general apathy of the parents and the want of qualified teachers. Time alone could remove the former, though a gradual change in the feelings of the people was perceptible. In order to supply efficient teachers Normal schools were established in suitable localities. Had the Normal schools for girls proved successful in training efficient teachers, they would have even then fulfilled in a very imperfect manner the object in view. Young women in the Province were, as a rule, unable or unwilling either to attend a Normal school or to serve as teachers at a distance from their homes.

Experience also showed that the multiplication of Primary schools for girls, before efficient teachers could be provided, led in most cases to failure and disappointment, and that no useful purpose of any kind was served by filling the infant department with small children. The need of Normal schools for girls was great, and the Normal classes for the training of women teachers started in the Alexandra school, the Christian Boarding School, the Municipal Board Central School, and the Church of England Zanana Mission Schools, at Amritsar rendered great service in 1892. The number of primary schools rose during year from 295 to 310 and the number of scholars from 8918 to 10,027 which was considered as satisfactory. With the growing number of these schools the work of the Inspectress of schools, because of the amount of travelling entailed in the winter months, was very heavy. She had to visit all the girls' schools in the province; which numbered 317 with 11,165 scholars in 1898. The average annual cost of educating a girl Rs. 10-5-0 of which over 60 per cent, was met from Public Funds and about 40 per cent from private sources, of which 1.5 per cent came from fees. Scholarships forming a large additional item of expenditure on girls' schools amounted to Rs. 17,561, or an average of Rs. 1-6-0 per head, compared with an average fee per head of less than 3 annas.

Up to 1902 girls' education was still in its infancy, but, considering the great obstacles that had to be contended with, considerable progress had been made in the past five years. The number of students had considerably increased. The want of suitable text-books was alluded to by the Inspectress of schools, and Miss Francis' suggestion that a series of readers for girls schools should be provided, received the consideration of the Department.

A normal school for women was established at Lahore on the fourth January, 1905, with a staff of 3 teachers and 18 pupils. Students preparing for the Senior Vernacular Certificate Examination were in receipt of a stipend of Rs. 8 per mensem, and those preparing for the Junior Vernacular Certificate Examination got a stipend of Rs. 5 per mensem.

The year 1905-06, marked a great progress towards girls' education. From all quarters indications were being received that the prejudice against the teaching of girls was at last breaking down. The attempts to deal with the problem of how to systematize the teaching went on in Zenanas, and substituted a proper curriculum under trained teachers for the desultory and spasmodic tuition imparted behind the *Parda*, were beginning to bear fruit. The efforts of Government in this direction were being seconded by the Arya and Dev Samaj, and by several Missionary bodies. It was noticed that among the 116 new schools opened during the year, 27 received no aid from Government. It is true that the obstacles raised by the parda system had not as yet been removed. Partly on this account and partly because Urdu was not the mother tongue of the pupils, the success among the Muslims was markedly less than among the Hindus. But in the case of Muslims, the signs were hopeful.

A demand for girls' education was felt in Delhi which had hitherto been completely apathetic and the lead in extension of girls schools was taken by the Muslim district of Rawalpindi. It was also felt that the provision of trained mistresses, enthusiastic in their profession, would bring the desired result. The growing number of these schools required the province to be divided in two circles in 1906 with a view to a thorough inspection of these schools.

Any curriculum which did not take into consideration what a girl's future was to be and did not train her to act rightly, or give her a strong sense of duty, was faulty. The length of school life naturally determined the curriculum and many children left school before any of their faculties as perception, memory and a certain amount of imagination had time to develop.

It has been said that throughout the nineteenth century the mistake made in education was that it was entirely the education of the intellect. It was particularly noticeable in these schools that the girls turned into dreamy unpractical women with no idea of how to act for themselves or to form correct judgements. It was, therefore, felt that henceforth the girls schools should take this into consideration and give more attention to subjects in which the children had to do something for themselves and at once apply the knowledge gained. The Punjab Government reviewed in the quinquennial report for the year ending 1912, on page 4 as follows:

"The marked awakening of interest in the education of girls throughout the province, and more particularly in the more progressive districts, is one of the most pleasing features of the report. The social problems, which do so much to make progress difficult, centred for the most part round the position of the Indian women. By educating her, rather than by any other way, will these problems be solved. It is significant that already there is a tendency to defer the marriages of girls in order to give them a better education, and in some of the towns, efforts are being made to continue their education after marriage. . . . . Primary education too cannot fail to have important and beneficial results, especially where, as in the case of boarding schools, it includes training in domestic economy. This should do much to improve the conditions of Indian home life. . . ."

The increase in attendance at girls' schools continued during the year 1913-14, the figure being 14 per cent as opposed to 10 per cent in the previous year. The progress was retarded for want of qualified mistresses. The same year the staff of the Inspectress was reorganised to consist of a chief Inspectress and her assistant and an Inspectress was appointed for each division. Miss Stratford was the first chief Inspectress appointed. An effort was made to supply trained mistresses through the Normal school for women at Lahore. Miss Must and her staff did their best to make the Normal school as effective as possible.



The work in the Punjab was for the most part done by Missionary societies. Reading was taught with a view to the reading of religious books. The only non-sectarian classes at present were taught by the house to house teachers of the Punjab Association. The chief Inspectress reported in 1916 that the vernaculars and needle work were usually well taught in the larger Primary schools, and arithmetic was brought to a standard sufficient for household needs. She again wrote in 1917 "Indian public opinion has slowly changed from its former attitude of positive dislike to the education of women and is now much more favourable as regards every community."

Miss Douglas, Inspectress of Schools, Rawalpindi Division, was placed on special duty in 1917 to conduct an enquiry into the subject at different centres in the Province. She found a considerable body of educated, but not very well-informed, public opinion in favour of a determined effort for the expansion of girls' education. The suggestions made for popularising girls' schools usually took the form of recommendations for the improvement of the curriculum and for the increased employment of Indian ladies on the school committees and in the inspecting staff.

As regards the first suggestion the recommendations were often based on ignorance of the existing curriculum, which in Primary schools consisted of the three 'R's together with needle work and the rudiments of geography, all that an ordinary elementary school mistress was likely to be able to teach. As to the desirability of enlisting the aid of Indian ladies in the cause of girls' education there could be no dispute. Miss Stratford wrote in her quinquennial report of 1917 on page 43: "There was a general consensus of opinion that Indian ladies should be the leaders in movements for the expansion of girls' education. The transference of the management of aided schools to the hands of Indian ladies, is, therefore, essential."

In February 1919, a conference on the education of girls was held at Lahore which recommended:

(1) that there should be at least one teacher for every 30 girls, and that there should be two teachers in every full primary school:

(2) that a standard minimum scale of salaries should be enforced as given in the Punjab Education report of 1918-19 at page 21;

(3) that a survey should be made of the needs for more schools;

(4) that a suitable provision be made for the school buildings.

The new classification adopted in 1919 for boys' schools had not been brought into operation for girls. The work of Primary Schools, though somewhat stereotyped, was said to be improving specially in arithmetic and language, but general knowledge and practical hygiene needed more attention.

During the year 1923 renewed efforts were made to render the schools more in tune with child nature and thus attractive to young girls, the aim being that they should remain at school for a longer time. Spasmodic and irregular attendance was the most dangerous defect. Many of the schools were still dreary, and uninspiring places for successful training.

The increase in the number of recognised schools was disappointing in 1927 and reflected adversely on the enthusiasm and sympathy of Local Bodies. The number of unrecognised schools fluctuated to a remarkable degree, and this indicated that many of these schools were of a very

ephemeral nature. The Deputy Directoress (The office of the chief Inspectress had been converted into that of the Deputy Directoress) was, of the opinion that some of these schools served a useful purpose and deserved recognition, but Local Bodies were reluctant to award grants-in-aid. She, therefore, urged that the grant-in-aid to these schools should be paid from provincial revenues. She was supported in her view by Mr. E.M. Jenkins, the then Deputy Commissioner, Hoshiarpur, in 1927 who wrote as follows:

“The state of girls’ education is most unsatisfactory. Schools and scholars are few, and the impossibility of exercising control through the district inspecting staff (for there is not sufficient work to justify the appointment of a district Inspectress, and the Inspectors cannot examine these schools) leads me to believe that it might be a good thing to provincialise the education of girls. The District Board at present does nothing but pay the bills (this is good news) and exercises no real control.”

The expansion and improvement of girls’ education in rural areas presented almost insuperable difficulties. But with all these, considerable success had been achieved by the year 1929 when the number of primary schools rose to 1409 with 73830 scholars. The Primary schools were improving, better methods of teaching were being employed, and attendance was becoming more regular.

Another important feature of the year 1929 was the experiment of co-education tried in several districts of the Punjab. It was found more economical than having separate primary schools for boys and girls. In places where it was possible to have women teachers in charge of Primary schools, there was a strong feeling in favour of the movement as women are usually better teachers of small children than men. Unfortunately, owing to the death of trained mistresses, it was not possible to do much in this direction, though in some places a master’s wife taught in the boy’s school.

Many of the difficulties still remain up to this day, for advance depends neither on Code nor on money, but on the complete change of attitude by the masses which might be effected through the influence of religion and constant propaganda work. The girl is a very busy member of the Indian village home, and the question, therefore, of the uplift of Indian womanhood is most vital for the country’s self-government, and, therefore, should be constantly kept before the people and a genuine desire for it will in course of time spring up.

It would be interesting to give here in this chapter what may be called, ‘A Roll of Honour’ of those who have been in direct charge of girls education.

Lady Inspectresses:

- (1) Mrs. Steel - 1883 to 1888 (Informal).
- (2) Miss Francis from 1888 to 1901 (The first lady formally appointed as Inspectress).
- (3) Mrs. Rodgers officiated in 1901.
- (4) Mrs. Francis in charge of western circle from 1902 to 1910. Appointed as Senior Inspectress.
- (5) Mrs. Ingram in charge of the eastern circle - she proceeded on leave from October 1907 to January 1908. Miss L.M. Stratford, Assistant Inspectress of the western circle officiated.

(6) Miss L.M. Stratford - appointed as Chief Inspectress in 1913 and as Deputy Directress in 1923. She proceeded on leave in 1928 when Miss E.M. Must officiated. Miss Stratford is still the Deputy Directress.

(7) Mr. Sanderson - he held charge of this office from 21.8.1930 to 27.10.1930, in addition to his own duties.

(8) Again No. (6) who continues.

The whole expansion of girls' education in the Punjab has been effected in the time of Miss Stratford whose name will have a loving memory in the history of girls' education. She stands prominent for her distinguished services to the cause of girls' education in the Punjab.

Footnotes:

1. *A History of Education in the Punjab, Lahore, 1932.*
2. First Punjab, Education Department Report, 1856-57.

## **THE AKALI MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>**

### **SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR**

#### **I**

##### **THE SIKHS AND THE BRITISH**

It was Sir Charles Aitchison who wrote:

“There has sprung up amongst the Sikhs in Punjab a feeling of brotherhood to England and of loyalty to the Crown which it will be our own fault to alienate.”

To-day when more than half a century has passed since the above was written, one may regard such a view rather antiquated; but it does no credit to British statesmanship of these days that a community known to be so loyal in the past should have to be declared as a beehive of rebels and outlaws. It is indeed one of the greatest scandals of recent political history of the British people that the Sikhs whom British statesmen like Lord Curzon and Lord Roberts only yesterday described as the “sword and shield” of the British Empire, should so soon have to be dubbed as a band of revolutionaries who conspired to deprive the King Emperor of his dominion in the Punjab. It is not a wonder of the times that men, who only a short while ago were awarded medals, swords and robes of honour for serving the British Empire most zealously and at a great sacrifice should soon after be paraded in streets with iron cuffs on their hands and fetters on their legs?

It was indeed a miracle of British statesmanship that a nation, which believed in 1849 that it was unjustly and treacherously deprived of its kingdom by the British, should fight in 1857 as the best champion of the British Raj in India. All credit for this wonderful achievement was due to men like Lawrence, Nicholson and other British statesmen of those days. But not less wonderful was the miracle wrought by men like Sir Edward Maclagan, Sir Malcolm Hailey and Lord Reading. The community which in 1918 was declared to have made, in proportion to their numbers, more sacrifices for the British Empire than any other Indian community, in 1923 was gazetted as the community of outlaws and rebels.

The first serious conflict between the Government and the Sikhs occurred in connection with the demolition of the outer wall of the Rikab Ganj Temple at Delhi. The Government desired to use a portion of the temple land for its own requirements in New Delhi, and the Sikhs resented the encroachment. The interests of the Government and the Sikhs did not clash to any serious extent. The Government could have easily left alone the Gurdwara; but drunk with the pride of power it did not care for the feelings of the Sikhs. The result was that for the first time in the history of the Punjab after the British occupation a bitter agitation arose amongst the Sikh masses, and relations between the Sikhs and the Government became seriously strained. Fortunately or unfortunately, the European war broke out and the Sikhs suddenly stopped all their hostile activities: a truce was declared and the Sikhs earnestly set themselves to help the British Government in its trouble in Europe.

After the war the Government hesitated for some time to undo the wrong it had done to the Sikhs in connection with the Rikab Ganj temple. The Government was approached to give up the land it had occupied and allow the Sikhs to rebuild the wall that was pulled down. But, as usual, where once the Government had made a mistake, it was difficult for it to retrace steps; Government was afraid of losing its prestige; it could not move in the right direction.

Certain prominent Sikhs met at Lahore to review the situation. After long and serious deliberations it was decided to organise a *Shahidi Jatha*, a band of martyrs, which should go to Delhi and build at all cost the demolished wall there in defiance of Government orders. If necessary they were required to lay their lives in the attempt to restore the sacred wall to its former position. This was the first proposal to adopt direct action as a method of agitation.

Happily Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha intervened and succeeded through Sir Edward Maclagan in advising the Government of India to let the Sikh Gurdwara alone and allow the Sikhs to rebuild the wall in its old place. Long before the date of the reaching of the Shahidi Jatha, the wall was rebuilt under Government instruction, and the first Sikh *Morcha* ended successfully with as much credit to the Government for its belated courage and sanity in undoing a wrong as to the Sikhs for the spirit of restraint and self-sacrifice they displayed throughout the agitation.

The *Komagata Maru* tragedy at Budge Budge was another cause of estrangement between the Sikhs and the Government. Through the foolishness of some police officers, a tragedy was enacted at Budge Budge that threw the whole of India into consternation. Much credit is due to Lord Hardinge for trying to relieve the tension produced by petty officials; but the subsequent ruthless treatment of the returned emigrants by Sir Michael O'Dwyer did not allow the sore to heal; and the injustice done to India and the Sikhs by the Canadian Government became a permanent cause of grievance against the British.

The Sikhs were in this attitude of mind, when they were thrown in the vortex of Martial law as a consequence of agitation against the Rowlatt Act. Under the military regime those tragedies were enacted in the Punjab that have for ever estranged the Indian mind from the British. I do not wish to dilate upon the movement that resulted in the Jallianwala murders; its course is well known to every Indian; I wish only to say that the Sikhs felt the Martial Law wound as deeply as any other Indian community. In fact in the Punjab they were amongst the foremost to welcome the Non-cooperation movement that followed in the wake of military terrorism in the Punjab.

Meanwhile a conflict had arisen between the Sikhs and the Government on the question of the control of Gurdwaras. It was Brig. General Dyer who had perpetrated at Amritsar one of the greatest wrongs to Indians, and it was he who was presented by the Manager and priests of the Golden Temple with the Robe of Honour for teaching a good lesson to the Indians. The Manager of the Temple was an honorary Government Official, and the priests were under his thumb; the Sikhs could no more tolerate such an arrangement.

Apart from such monstrous instances, the priests not only did not allow the orthodox Sikhs to freely worship in the Sikh temples, but under Government protection, they became bold to turn the Sikh temples into dens of vice and sin. The character of some of the Sikh priests was no better than that of the Abbots and monks whom Henry VIII had to turn out from the mediaeval monasteries. The life in Sikh temples was often of as scandalous a type as that of the English monasteries before the Reformation. The priests drank and gambled like publicans; they robbed and bullied the pilgrims like highwaymen and dishonoured women and children like rogues of the worst type.

And these priests were under the protection of the Government. When people agitated against such persons, the Government would not listen; it would not remove these monsters of evil from their immoral occupation. It is not meant that the Government sympathised with the vices of

these priests, but as these men knew how to please the officials, the Government did not care to pay attention to the voice of the people. The result was the Akali movement of which one has heard so much during the last few years.

The Sikhs claimed that the Gurdwaras were public property and that the public had a right to remove its agents, the *Mahants* or priests, when they did not conform to the wishes of the people. On the other hand the Government regarded the *Mahants* as legal owners of the Gurdwaras and was not prepared to remove them unless the public went to the courts and got legal decrees against them. This meant that the people should spend thousands of rupees in litigation, and waste months and months for many years in dancing attendance on the court officials. The priests, at the same time, were free to spend public money like water to consolidate and defend their immoral position. In some of the cases Sikhs had to fight for as much as seven years to ensure a judicial decree, and that too of a doubtful value.

Side by side with the Gurdwara question, there was the question of the *Kirpan* or sword kept by the Sikhs as a religious symbol. In 1914, after a prolonged agitation, the keeping of Kirpans by the Sikhs was exempted from the purview of the Arms Act. But the Government of Punjab tried to nullify this exemption by illegally putting limitations on the length of the Kirpan. The Sikhs could not tolerate this interference with their religious symbol and continued to use long Kirpans in defiance of Government orders. On the other side the Government did not shirk from putting many important Sikhs in jails for the offence that they kept Kirpans which their religion enjoined and which in their opinion were allowed them under the law.

It is true that, later on, due to a decision of the Punjab High Court, the Government was obliged to realise its mistake and stop prosecuting the Sikhs for keeping Kirpans; but this happened long after much mischief had been done and the Sikh feelings permanently estranged from the British Government.

## II

### THE THIRD SIKH WAR

We find that in the beginning of 1920, the Sikhs were smarting not under one or two disabilities, but had quite half-a-dozen grievances to nurse. Such a state could not continue for long. Under a constitutional Government when the administration does not respond to the wishes of the people, the administrative system is changed or the administrators are removed. But when the Government is irresponsible the only course left for the people, when they have exhausted all lawful means to influence the Government, is to start a revolution; they take the law in their own hands. In former times revolution was almost always accompanied by bloodshed. The measures which the Government adopted to repress the people, add which the people adopted to coerce the Government were always violent. Thanks to Mahatma Gandhi, a new method was for the first time introduced in the national life of India. It did not avoid bloodshed because it had no control over Government forces, but it tried its best to eschew all violence on the part of the people. The Sikhs declared a peaceful war against the unjust and immoral laws that governed the management of the Gurdwaras and offered a challenge to the Government to do its worst to maintain such laws.

The Sikhs call it the *Third Sikh War*. On account of the treachery of their ministers and generals the Sikhs were defeated in two Sikh wars fought against the British in the middle of the last century. They lost their country to the British and were content to wait patiently for whatever may be in store for them in the womb of time. But in this their Third War they were a bit more careful

and more determined. The States here were their Gurdwaras and their Religion. The Sikhs love their country; they have fought its battles as valiantly as any other nation in the world: but they also love their religion with equal devotion. The Sikh knows that if his religion is safe, he can certainly regain the lost liberty of his country; but if his religion is not safe, even if his country be free, there is no guarantee that he shall be able to maintain that freedom. In fact it is the freedom of his religion that is the best safeguard for the freedom of his country. A Sikh wants (to fight his country's battles from the vantage ground of his religions. Being of a religious trend of mind, he finds everything subordinate to his *Dharma*; politics is nothing for him but a promising child of religion.

A Sikh has not yet developed that fine sense of doubtful value that divides life into water-tight compartments and makes of religion in the West something different from one's social and political life. For the Sikh, politics and religion are one. He wants the freedom of his religion, he wants the freedom of his country, but he knows that he cannot have one without the other. If religion is safe, he is sure to get back, soon or late, the freedom of the country. In fact he regards religion as the strong post from which one should start to get back the lost liberty, as, in his opinion, the religious spirit, alone can keep the freedom of a country safe when once that has been won.

I fear I have stepped here on debatable ground; but it was necessary to put the Sikh point of view so that one may properly appreciate the various implications of the Akali movement.

After a few preliminary skirmishes, the Third Sikh War started in right earnest in 1920, when the Sikhs occupied by peaceful penetration some of the Gurdwaras at Sialkot and Amritsar. The Government was taken aback and had no set policy chalked out to meet the new situation. It tried to resist the Sikh activities by force, but the force did not amount to anything more than an imposing demonstration of the police and the military. Government had no desire to release its hold over the Gurdwaras through the agency of the accommodating *Mahants*; at the same time it was not prepared to come into direct conflict with the Sikhs on a point which it knew to be so delicate.

The Sikhs did not stop with their initial victories. They were not cowed down by the harmless demonstration which the Government made to inspire fear in their hearts. Gurdwara after Gurdwara was occupied by moral pressure, and *Mahants* had to bow before the huge volume of public opinion.

Government could not tolerate this for long. It had no mind to allow the nationalist Sikhs to occupy the Gurdwaras which were in the hands of loyal and unscrupulous *Mahants*.

Under official inspiration the priests were organised and pitted against the Akalis. The feelings of the Hindus and Muslims were also exploited against the Sikhs. Some of the unscrupulous Sikhs who had flourished on false reputation and borrowed prestige were also invited to support the Government.

The Maharaja of Patiala was egged on to form a Committee to control some of the important Sikh Gurdwaras. But the Akalis, now roused to the highest pitch of religious enthusiasm, brushed aside this Committee and formed a new Committee representing Sikhs from all over India. The work of the reform of the Gurdwaras was entrusted to this Committee, and thus were laid the foundations of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, a body which won quite an enviable position very soon after its establishment.

The so-called leaders, the men put forward by the Government to fight the popular party, were not prepared to render open help to the Government in any drastic steps it might have liked to take. The Hindus and Muslims in the Punjab were then under the control of the national leaders who had full sympathy with the Akali movement; so they too were not allowed to fall into the trap laid for them by the Government to fall foul of the Sikhs. At that stage, it was only the *Mahants* who tried to rally their forces around the Government and give open battle to the Sikhs. The priests of Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Nankana Sahib openly used violence against the unarmed and non-violent Akalis, and a band of more than one hundred Sikhs was brutally murdered by the *Mahant* of Nankana Sahib in open day light within a few hour's run from Lahore, the seat of the Punjab Government.

### III

#### DIRECT ACTION

The die was thus cast at Nankana. The Government could no longer hope to act against the Akalis through the *Mahants*. These worthy gentlemen had gone far beyond the instructions or suggestions they may have received in this respect.

In a hurry the Government passed a bill to control the future management of the Gurdwaras. The measure received no support from the Sikhs. In fact the Sikhs opposed it tooth and nail. But it was rushed through the local Council with the help of the safe votes of the official block. The result of this unwise move was that the Sikhs refused to have anything to do with the new measure. It remained a dead letter.

At the same time the Government stepped forward with its disciplined forces to check the progress of the Akali *Jathas*. If the Sikhs wanted to occupy a Gurdwara, they were no longer allowed to do so with impunity. The disputed Gurdwaras were patrolled by the armed police; the invading Akalis were arrested and charged with trespass, robbery or dacoity.

The Punjab Government proved more zealous in instituting such trumped up cases than in prosecuting the murderers of the non-violent Akalis. Due to the negligence of the officers in charge of the prosecution of the Nankana murderers, only a fraction of the culprits involved in that case could be convicted. Of the murderers of more than one hundred Akalis scarcely a dozen men could be convicted of the crime of murder, and of those convicted not more than two or three were adequately punished. The Sikhs laid the blame at the doors of the prosecuting agency; they charged it with neglect of duty. Whatever the actual facts, there was no doubt that the police were more anxious to arrange for the prosecution of the Akali pilgrims to Nankana than to arrest the men who had committed one of the most horrible crimes of the modern times. Under such circumstances when criminals who brutally attacked the non-violent Akalis could go scot free, and when pilgrims to the temples could be arrested and prosecuted on baseless charges, it became necessary for the Sikhs to launch their attack more systematically.

Some of the important Sikhs put their heads together and a definite scheme for attack was put before the community. It was proposed that *Jatha* after *Jatha* should go to occupy Gurdwaras, and suffer arrest, imprisonment, persecution, and even death as long as the Government did not make the Gurdwaras free of all irresponsible control.

The suggestion caught the imagination of the Sikh community. The author of these studies, who was regarded as responsible for this suggestion, was prosecuted and sentenced to five years' deportation but the Akali *Jathas* all over the country welcomed the suggestion, and the Shiromani



Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee gladly adopted it as its *modus operandi* for occupying the Gurdwaras which the Government or the *Mahants* had under their control to the exclusion of the rights of the Khalsa. The result was a more systematic, a more determined, and altogether a more serious struggle between the Sikhs and the Government.

Many of the *Mahants* voluntarily put the Gurdwaras under the control of the Central Sikh Committee. But still several held out and worked as tools in the hands of the Government, and gave battle to the Sikhs. The Sikhs got possession of these Gurdwaras by sending *Jathas* to occupy them in defiance of the wishes of the Government' and the *Mahants*. Of the *Morchas* or battles thus fought the well-known ones are those of Guru ka Bagh, Jaito and Bhai Pheru - not very important places in themselves, but which will for ever be remembered as monuments of glorious victory for the cause of nonviolence.

People know what happened in these different places. It will be sufficient to quote here from the Congress report about the Guru ka Bagh affair to show in what spirit the Sikhs proceeded to these places and how they were treated by the police and other Government forces. Messrs Srinivas Iyengar, Sen Gupta, Tyabji, Stokes and Abhyankar in reporting to the Congress concluded the results of their enquiry in these words:

"We are constrained to observe that the arbitrary and lawless way in which violence was resorted to, was deliberate and in utter disregard of such humanity as even a Government is bound to show. In these beatings, which in our view exceeded the necessities of the situation markedly there was a distinct note of humiliation that should have been guarded against in view of the previous happenings in the Punjab. . . . The contrast between the methods adopted by the Government of the Punjab and those adopted by the Akalis has been such as to leave no ground of defence available for the Government. Lastly we cannot help expressing our profound admiration for the spirit of martyrdom and orderliness which animated the Akalis and for their unflinching adherence to the gospel of non-violence and for the noble way in which they conducted themselves under circumstances of prolonged and unusual exasperation."

#### IV

##### FRUITFUL SUFFERINGS

During the whole struggle as many as thirty thousand men had to go to jails; about five hundred of them died or were otherwise killed or murdered; fines and penalties to the extent of fifteen lacs were also imposed on the Sikhs during those days. But these figures do not tell the full story of the Sikh sufferings. For this, one has to study the condition of the Sikh prisoners in jails, or one has to see how the unprotected Sikh children and women had to suffer when protectors of the family were removed from them. There are hundreds of pathetic stories that tell the tale of Sikh troubles as no figures can tell. None can desire to dwell long on this painful episode in the Sikh struggle, but indulgence must be requested to quote here from popular literature three or four stories that significantly point out how the Sikhs bore their cross and how boldly even woman, children and old men behaved in the hour of their trial.

A young boy, nine years old, of Jullundur was arrested on the ground that he carried the Kirpan in the hand rather than in the orthodox fashion in the belt. The fact was that the boy was going to school and in hurry had broken a strap of the belt; he was thus obliged to carry the sword temporarily in hand. The boy was challaned and put before a Magistrate. The Magistrate ordered that either the boy should pay rupees fifty as fine or go to jail for one month. The boy's father

wanted to pay the fine, but the boy refused. "If you pay money for the fine, I am no longer your son. I shall never go home with you." The father was obliged to withhold the fine. The boy went to the jail triumphantly and remained there for the full term of imprisonment.

A batch of Akalis was deported from Lahore to a distant place outside the Punjab. The relatives of the prisoners had gathered on the Lahore Cantonment Railway Station to see them off, but the police did not allow them to go near the train. In a corner of the platform, quite apart from others, stood two women, one about fifty and the other about twenty. Silently they watched and wept; no body paid attention to them. When the train started, both of them ran after the train and tried to follow it as fast as they could. The train ran faster and faster and both the ladies were left far behind. After a race of a few minutes, when the train had almost disappeared, the old woman fell down senseless on the stones on the railway line. The young girl tried to run about half a furlong more and she too then fell down exhausted. The old woman was the mother of one of the Akali prisoners and the young girl was his wife. The girl was married only a few months before the arrest of her husband. Both women had no one else to look after them.

As is usual in such cases, after the disappearance of the guardian of the family, the ladies were harassed and persecuted by the petty officials of the village; their life was made miserable. Then a senior officer approached and asked them that all their troubles should end if they were to write the Akali prisoner related to them to come out of the jail after giving the humiliating undertaking not to associate with the Akalis again. The blood of the old woman and the young girl got boiled at the suggestion. Their heroic reply was: "we would see our man die than ask him to stoop so low."

An old man accompanied the *Shahidi Jatha* to Jaito. On the way the man fell ill and was left behind on the road in charge of men of the locality. The man was dying and the people tried to take him to the village near by. "No, I cannot leave the road. I have vowed to the Gum not to turn my face from the field of battle. I must reach Jaito or die." And the man died on the road. His last words were, "Have we reached Jaito?"

When the first *Shahidi Jatha* was fired upon at Jaito, a stray shot struck a baby in the arms of its mother. The baby died in an instant. The mother put the baby along with the other wounded and killed, and rushed forward along with the members of the *Jatha* encouraging them to face the bullets bravely. After reaching the temple she bowed her head to God. She felt grateful that she was given chance to reach the temple in face of the bullets that killed her baby.

In every village one could hear of such stories of heroic deeds and pathetic suffering; in fact it were these acts of bravery and sacrifice which created a new life amongst the Sikhs in those days.

## V

### THE NABHA QUESTION

After such sacrifices the people naturally thought that the first phase of the Sikh struggle had ended at the Guru Ka Bagh. Some people were of the opinion that after the restoration of the keys of the Golden Temple to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee the Government would no more quarrel with the Sikhs in connection with the Gurdwaras. These hopes proved to be wrong. The way in which the Sikhs acquitted themselves at Guru Ka Bagh, and the unsuccessful efforts of the Government to suppress them, convinced every body that it would not again touch the Sikhs light-heartedly. The Sikhs too, after occupying the important Gurdwaras, were not in a mood to

welcome fight merely for the sake of fight. They were also anxious to consolidate their position and to organise their resources.

The Hindu-Moslem riots in Amritsar proved how the Government and the Sikhs could again work together for a common end. Not only did the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee put its forces at the disposal of the Government for the restoration of peace and order, but Government officials also waited at the office of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee for help and thanked that body for the support it had given to the Government and the country at such a critical juncture.

This did not mean that there was a restoration of friendship between the Government and the Sikhs. Peace between the Hindus and Moslems was as dear to the heart of the Akalis as it could be to that of the Government. But there was absolutely no doubt that after Guru Ka Bagh neither the Government nor the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee wanted to quarrel for nothing. Almost all important Sikh leaders connected with the Gurdwara movement were released, the use of the Kirpan was freely allowed, and all the important Gurdwaras were under the unmolested control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Why then should there be any more quarrel at all? Unfortunately this peace could not last for long. Trouble arose from quite an unexpected quarter.

Jealousy between the Maharajas of Nabha and Patiala had been growing more and more intense during the last ten years or so. There were efforts at reconciliation, but family feuds and pride of position did not allow the princes to have that real friendship for each other which alone could ensure the peace of the two neighbourly States. A set of mischievous and selfish courtiers succeeded in making both the princes dead enemies of each other. Intrigues and counter intrigues led to open hostilities, and there was a danger of both the States being engulfed in a fatal conflict. The quarrel between both the princes could have been easily settled by impartial arbitration, but the Maharaja of Nabha had the misfortune of possessing manners not much to the liking of the Political Department of the Government of India. The independence of character, sympathy with the national aspirations and interest in the Akali struggle, were sufficient to create against him suspicions in the minds of certain Government officials, instead of arbitrating on the quarrel between both the princes and imposing penalties where necessary, Government officials, under threat of prosecution and disgrace, forced the Maharaja of Nabha to abdicate. Persecuted by enemies, stricken with grief, deserted by those on whom he relied, the Maharaja of Nabha lost much of his well-reputed boldness, and much against his will, yielded to the demands of his opponents.

It should be remembered that the Phulkian Chiefs are as dear to the Sikhs as the Khalifa to the Moslems. In fact the Maharaja of Nabha, though a *bete noir* of the official world, was regarded by the Sikhs as the apple of the Sikh community's eye. Not only were his character and attainments much appreciated by the Sikhs, his activities in the national field had also their full support.

The forced abdication of the Maharaja led to strong agitation amongst the Sikhs. The agitation ran on perfectly constitutional lines when all of a sudden British officials in the Nabha State forcibly dispersed a peaceful meeting of the Akalis who had gathered in the Sikh temple at Jaito to pray for the restoration of the Maharaja to the *Gaddi* of his fathers. The Sikhs could understand the persecution of those who went beyond the law in accusing Government of high-handedness or injustice, but they could not tolerate the interference of the new Nabha

administration in a ceremony that was purely religious. They could not tolerate interference in their right of free worship.

A state of war was thus declared and *Jatha* after *Jatha* poured into Jaito to assert their right of free worship. The Nabha officials arrested these men, sometimes kept them in prison, and sometimes released them after some harassment. Some of these pilgrims were shot down; some died in jails, it was alleged, for want of proper care and on account of brutal treatment; others were kept in Nabha prisons under conditions unworthy of a civilised administration.

The Punjab Government had no mind to interfere in an agitation against an administration not under its own control; and the *Jathas* from the Punjab continued to attack peacefully the totally wrong and untenable position of the Nabha administration. This could not go on for very long. Under instruction from the Government of India the Punjab Government launched a rigorous attack at the base of the Akali headquarters, and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the Akali Dal were declared unlawful bodies, and almost all important Sikh leaders were arrested and thrown into prison. Charges of sedition, conspiracy, criminal intimidation and rebellion were levelled against these men and the judicial machinery was set in motion to bring them to book. This did not intimidate the Sikhs; they continued their activities as vigorously as before; rather, they started Civil Disobedience in Punjab itself at Bhai Pheru Gurdwara in the Lahore district.

The Government was not prepared to climb down and restore the Maharaja Nabha to the throne; nor could the Sikhs be coerced into giving up the agitation they had begun. The Nabha question, itself was set aside for the time being, and the measures which the Government adopted to stop the Nabha agitation themselves became the cause of conflict. The Sikhs had not yet decided to resort to direct action in connection with the Nabha question, and were at their wit's ends to find out some method for protesting effectively against the Government decision. But the Nabha officials by foolishly interfering in the right of free worship at Jaito, gave them an occasion for civil disobedience which otherwise they would not have easily got.

The Government soon realised the mistake of its agents, but it could not do anything substantial to undo the wrong done to the Sikhs; this would have lowered its prestige in the eyes of the public. Lord Oliver once said, it is common with the bureaucracy in India not to do justice to the people even when it has realised its mistake because this goes against its ideas of prestige. To save their face, officials have often to persist in a policy which is wrong both in principle and as regards its effect on the public mind.

At last Sir William Birdwood, lately the Commander-in-Chief of India, was appointed under instruction from the Central Government to settle terms of peace with the Sikhs. Almost everything was settled in a few days; but at the eleventh hour the negotiations fell through, it was said, on account of the advent of Sir Malcolm Hailey. Whatever the real cause of General Birdwood's failure, it was certain that the negotiations broke down on trifles. At the back of this failure there appeared to be an idea somewhere favouring a trial of strength once again to coerce the Sikhs into abject submission.

## VI

### ANOTHER TRIAL

With the advent of Sir Malcolm Hailey as Governor of the Punjab, a new impetus was given to the forces of repression; the Sikhs were arrested and imprisoned on a much larger scale than was

ever done before his arrival. By active propagandas, His Excellency tried to rally round himself some discredited.' *Jo Hukams*'; he also tried to win back the sympathy of the Hindus and Moslems to his side by painting the Sikhs as their enemies.

With all his ability, resourcefulness and zeal. His Excellency could not succeed in suppressing the determined activities of the Sikhs. They had been fighting against heavy odds for the last four years, all their leaders were thrown into the Jail; their resources were put to a very serious strain; but with the teeth set strongly, they continued the struggle with all the spirit and zeal that they could claim to possess. The Hindus and Moslems had given up their quarrel with the Government; instead of fighting the bureaucracy, they had begun to fight amongst themselves; the Sikhs were left alone. But single-handed they continued the fight, and they won.

The Jaito question was soon solved. Nabha officials were forced to yield to the Sikh demand; the Gurdwara was opened to the Sikhs, and the Akali *Jathas* marched triumphantly to the temple. But the settlement of the Jaito question proved the death knell of the Nabha agitation. Most of the Akali leaders felt tired of the struggle. Others were won over by Patiala money. Never again did the Nabha agitation secure that support which it had received before the launching of the *Jaito Morcha*. The Maharaja was left hanging in the middle with no approach on any side.

As regards the Gurdwara question. Sir Malcolm Hailey was obliged to re-open the negotiations with the accredited representatives of the outlaws and rebels. With the co-operation of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Sikhs had prepared a Bill to secure legal control of the Gurdwaras, and through the support of the Hindu and some Moslem members of the Punjab Council they expected to see it through the local Council. But Sir Malcolm Hailey stepped down from his high pedestal and invited the Sikhs to open negotiations with his officials direct.

It is a debatable point whether the Sikhs ought or ought not to have opened negotiations with the Government when there were so many chances of putting the Government in the wrong by proceeding independently with Malaviya Ji's Bill. But there can be no doubt, that by accepting the Government invitation, even when made under suspicious circumstances, the Akalis once more made it clear that they were not fighting simply for the sake of fighting, that notwithstanding so much experience of the futility of such negotiations, they were ever ready to come to terms with the Government if it was prepared to yield to the reasonable demands of the Sikhs.

Negotiations this time ended in the passing of the Sikh Gurdwara Act. The new Act did not give entire satisfaction to the Sikhs. It bristled with defects both in the underlying principles and in the working out of details. It was a delicate experiment unknown to the history of the Sikh religion, unknown perhaps to the history of the whole religious world. It was somewhat novel that religious establishments of a community were put directly under the control of a legislative body and an executive Government which were dominated by men not belonging to that community.

The Punjab Legislative Council is elected on communal basis; it consists of a non-Sikh majority that is not all responsible to the Sikhs community. In the past it has shown remarkable indifference to the best interests of the Sikhs. Once it passed a Gurdwara Bill in the teeth of Sikh opposition, and it allowed the Government, to treat the non-violent Akalis as harshly as it asked without raising a finger in protest. To entrust the Sikh Gurdwaras to the control and supervision of such a body was indeed somewhat hazardous. But a great majority of the Sikhs inspired by self-reliance and reasonableness agreed to try the experiment and see how it worked.

## VII

### CHARGES AGAINST THE AKALIS

The Sikh attitude throughout the whole struggle was eminently reasonable. This naturally leads us to discuss some of the accusations which were generally levelled against the Sikhs. They were charged with having broken laws of the land and of having introduced religion in politics in order to befool the public.

It was not for the first time in the history of the Sikhs, that their zeal for religious reform was misinterpreted as political propaganda. For the same reason Mughal officials accused the Sikhs of rebellion and sedition. But, for the Sikhs, as it has already been said, politics and religion are interchangeable terms. Politics involve the righting of wrongs, and for a Sikh the righting of a wrong is *Dharma*, religion. If others called such activities political, the Sikhs could not quarrel with them. The Sikhs could not see their Gurdwaras under control of irresponsible and dissolute persons. If the Government or any body else read something more in the movement, more than what was on the face of it, they were welcome to do so. The freedom of the Gurdwaras certainly gives to the Sikh public a great deal of power, and that power must necessarily be used for the uplift of the community as a whole. If any wrong is done to the Sikhs in any sphere of life, political or religious, they are sure to resist it with all the power and resources made recently available to them.

Also when it was said that the Sikhs broke laws, one might have replied at once that the Sikhs were not very anxious to defend themselves against this charge. Laws, bad and immoral, must, if possible, be legally repealed, but if all legal means available to a community were exhausted, direct action was the only constitutional remedy left to the aggrieved.

The Sikhs broke laws only when all legal means had failed. Under such circumstances recourse to Civil Disobedience was as legitimate a weapon as the use of poisons under medical advice. No body can break laws simply for the fun of it; it is one of the most expensive games in the world; and only those can play it who are forced to do so, who have no other means for escape from a difficult situation. In this pretty game the Sikhs had to send thirty thousand men to Jails, two thousand of them were wounded severely and about five hundred of them died; and the community had to pay about fifteen lakhs of rupees in fines and forfeiture of property. When the Sikhs had to suffer so much, no body could rightly accuse them of going into the fight light heartedly. They had to do so only when no other honourable course was left open to them. For them it was a question of living in shame and disgrace or dying with honour. Every man with a little respect for principles and with a little love for his cherished ideals would do the same what was done by the Sikhs.

The Sikhs broke laws which were admittedly harmful to the best interests of the society. They did not break laws for any ulterior motive; it was dishonest to accuse them of an intention to deprive His Majesty of his dominion in the Punjab in order to establish Sikh *Raj* instead. It may be admitted that there are millions of Indians, Sikhs included, who would if they could, try to deprive His Majesty of his possessions in India and establish instead an Indian *Raj*. The attitude of His Majesty's representatives in this country had led many of our countrymen to believe that they have no other course left for getting Indian disabilities removed except rebellion, violent or peaceful. The Bengal revolutionaries, the Sikh Babars, and believers in Civil Disobedience are living examples of this tendency in the Indian mind. But when it was said that the Akalis and their leaders conspired among themselves to deprive His Majesty of his dominion in the Punjab and to establish instead Sikh *Raj*, one could say, without any reservation, that the charge was monstrously false.

The Government charges against the Akalis were certainly baseless; but there was no doubt about it that the Akali movement was only an offshoot of the national movement. During the struggle the national spirit impregnated the Sikh hearts through and through; they desired to assume responsibility as much for the control and management of the temples as for the administration of the country.

The Akali movement is the direct cause of so much of the spirit of self-reliance we see amongst the Sikhs these days. It has for ever destroyed the abject feeling of blind loyalty to an irresponsible system that marked the history of the Sikhs for the last seventy years. The Sikhs are now no more prepared to kowtow before bureaucrats or autocrats, foreign or native. With Sikhs, national movement for Independence has come to stay. People who go to the state parties and state function, who join Government service or accept Government titles, do so with apology and shame. They can never again feel proud of these institutions as they used to do before the crusade of the non-violent Akalis.

The Sikhs may or may not be able to totally dissociate themselves from the British Government in the future. Much depends on the strength of their own organisation and on the support the movement gets from the other Indian communities, but the question of co-operation and friendship with the British Government was for them for ever settled on the plains of Jaito and Guru Ka Bagh. After those tragedies no heart-to-heart co-operation can even be possible between the Sikhs and the British Government.

The Sikhs cannot rest unless *Swaraj* is won. They have realised that their sacred temples and hearths and homes cannot be really free unless India becomes free. They know that Gurdwara question cannot be settled entirely to the satisfaction of the Sikhs unless a national Government is established in their country.

In fact in defeating the Government on the Gurdwara question the Sikhs have won the first decisive battle of the *Swaraj* movement. The Sikhs fought for the Gurdwaras, no doubt, but not less for the principle that the bureaucracy should yield to the wishes of the people. By fighting for the Gurdwaras, the Sikhs tried to make the irresponsible Government responsible to the people and one should rejoice to think that the Sikhs won, and won without striking a single blow against those who used brute force against them so mercilessly.

The Sikhs are in for a long and continuous war with the irresponsible system of government that prevails in the country. In the question of Gurdwara they have got almost all that they wanted. But they have so many more demands in other spheres of life. They will not rest unless all these demands are conceded, and this cannot come until the goal of *Swaraj* is reached.

## VIII

### SOME LESSONS

It has been said that the Akali victory is the first victory of the national movement. The remarks may or may not be true, but there is little doubt that the Sikh struggle has many a good lesson for the nationalists.

The Akali have proved that a government can be unlodged from its unreasonable position as effectively by non-violent means as by violent. If the Bengal revolutionaries claim for themselves

the doubtful victory in connection with the Partition of Bengal, the Sikhs can now show that by non-violence they have been able to achieve a more sure victory in the question of the Gurdwaras.

The Akali struggle has revealed inexhaustible potentialities of passive suffering. I do not know whether the Moplahs had to suffer as much for their independence as the Sikhs had to do for their Gurdwaras, but who would deny that all the sufferings of the Moplahs went merely to waste, and that the sufferings of the Sikhs fructified far beyond their best expectations?

In recent times nowhere was better illustrated the truth "of all the seeds sown on earth, the blood of the martyrs is the surest to germinate, and the harvest follows soonest upon the sowing." Repression proved a great tonic for the Sikhs community. Never before were they so well organised and able to bring their small community to the highest level of efficiency.

In the school of suffering the Sikhs got the best form of education. For sometime past the Khalsa had forgotten this great lesson. The best that could want was the training that they now got. It was only through suffering that the community was able to wash off its past sins; it was only in this way that they were able to shed off the slough of ease and idleness, the slough of shame and slavery, that attached till very recently to their names.

A true Sikh knows not how to turn his back against a sacred cause; once he is in, is always there; death or victory alone can induce him to leave the battlefield; if those who opposed the Sikhs knew how to kill, the Sikhs also knew how to die; if others could boast of heavy guns and huge bombs, the Sikhs too could face such weapons with broad chests and stout hearts. In all such struggles victory is not with the pilate who condemns the Christ to death, but with the Christ who is crucified. It is the victim that is victorious.

We should keep in mind that Sikhs won not so much by appealing to the conscience of the rulers, as by proving to them their determination to welcome suffering till they had won. This spirit of theirs so embarrassed the Government that the officials had to yield not because their hearts were touched, but because they saw there could be no peace in the country unless all the reasonable demands of the Sikhs were conceded.

The Akali struggle clearly proved that when you have to attack a system, it is of little use to appeal to its conscience, because a system has no conscience. You have to corner misguided and obstinate administrators in such a way as they might feel that yielding to the public demand is the only safe course if their own peace and comfort were to be ensured.

It is absolutely necessary that when a campaign of Direct Action is launched; it should be launched on such a large scale as to definitely force the hands of the bureaucracy. For complete and sure success, it is absolutely necessary that the civil disobedience attacks should be made in mass-formations. Only such objects should be chosen for attack as would make the Government feel really embarrassed and upset. Attacks on a small scale and measures adopted haphazardly produce little impression on the Government. To storm a strong fort pyrotechnics can be of little use; you have to employ heavy guns for that purpose.

We should also keep in mind that it is no use of bluffing the nation known as the nation of archbluffers. It is only something real and practical that can force your rights out of the grasping hands of an obstinate person. It were not the Akali sacrifices that so much impressed the British



officials as the constant occupation of the Gurdwaras in defiance of law, and the determination to keep them in occupation at all cost.

When in contest with a well-organised Government, one should not over-estimate the strength of one's own weapons. One should not think that as soon as one has come into the field the Government would retire. The Akali struggle had to last for about five years. Most of those who first took part in it thought that the Government would yield the moment it came to know that the Sikhs had fallen out with the officials. Many of the Sikhs had not the long vision to see that the struggle would be a protracted one. If the final terms which the Sikhs got were not to their entire satisfaction it was due to the fact that there were some amongst them who had not counted the length of time which the struggle could occupy. It is a fact that in the last phases of the Akali movement there was a sort of impatience in certain Sikh circles, a sort of war-weariness; and it was due to this and this alone that the Sikhs could not secure victory all along the line. In a nationwide struggle only those should come forward who are determined to see the fight through and at all cost.

During the struggle with the Delhi Emperors and Afghan invaders, it took the Sikhs about a century to defeat the enemy. In one battle alone they are said to have lost as many as thirty thousand men. The Sikhs were declared outlaws many times. One who could bring the head of a Sikh before the authorities received forty rupees as prize money. Times were changed; the Sikhs had not now to face such ordeals. But in future only those should come forward to bear the cross who are imbued with the spirit of their forefathers, though with this difference that while their fathers could wreak vengeance in their own turn, the present fighters must banish all such ideas out of their minds. The last struggle proved that there were thousands of Sikhs who were imbued with such a spirit. Weakness was only found among some of the leaders. When the nationalists take the field again, it should be carefully seen that weaklings are weeded out, and only those are allowed to come forward who clearly understand what is demanded of them and what they have to do.

When once you have adopted the principle of non-violence, it is absolutely necessary that you should stick to it like something sacred. There should be absolutely no breach of this rule. Not only in action but in word and thought also this principle should be adhered to. The more non-violent you are the greater is the sympathy you get from those amongst your own community who in the beginning seem to be indifferent. Your opponents may not be influenced by your non-violent attitude, but non-violence has great effect in attracting those amongst the sister communities who otherwise would like to remain only as spectators and sightseers.

The Sikh sufferings had the great effect of bringing to their fold even those persons who formerly stood on the side of their opponents. Many a titled dignitary, many of the most loyal servants of the Government who had stood by it through thick and thin, came to the Akali camp when they found them perfectly non-violent in their behaviour even when some of them were treated in a manner at once mean and brutal.

Those who in beginning helped the Government to put the Akalis into Jail, afterwards themselves rushed to the Jails shoulder to shoulder with the Akalis. They did not like the movement, but even their hearts were afterwards melted; they could not stand aside after such spectacles of courage and self-sacrifice as were witnessed at Jaito and Guru Ka Bagh.

The Akali movement was pre-eminently the movement of the masses, of the humble folk recruited from amongst peasants, artisans, and labourers. Doctors, pleaders, editors, merchants and the professors were all in the movement, but their number was very small. They served only to leaven the whole movement with the intellectual yeast; otherwise the movement was carried on mainly by the enthusiasm and sacrifice of those who had no other qualifications but those of simple faith and deep devotion.

The Indian nationalists cannot succeed unless they take the humbler classes with them; deputations of great men to England, verbal disputes by clever politicians in the Councils, thundering speeches hurled from the public platforms, cannot be of much use to the Indian nationalist unless the peasants, the artisans, and the labourers are ready to support them through and through.

The sympathy and co-operation of the masses are impossible unless the movement for Swaraj is raised to a higher level than the scramble for posts and votes. You cannot enthuse masses with these petty ideals. So many Sikhs flocked to the flag of the Shiromani Committee not because the Sikh leaders could get a few thousand acres of Gurdwara lands or few lacs of rupees to use in their own way, but because some far higher, far nobler, stake was put before them to be won. For land and money, for votes and posts, you cannot expect thousands of men to lay their lives and show readiness to suffer all sorts of troubles.

The Akali movement teaches the nationalists that their ideal of Swaraj should be spiritual; love of the motherland, love of liberty, should be fostered for their own sakes, and not as means for petty gains which might fall to the lot of a few.

Last but not the least is the demonstration of the great truth that a nation or a community can succeed in reaching an ideal only when there is found amongst its members a readiness to make liberal sacrifices for that ideal. It has already been mentioned how lavishly the Sikhs had to make sacrifices and how patiently they had to bear all sorts of suffering. No Sikh locality was left which did not mourn the loss of a martyr, and hardly any Sikh family was without a member or near relation rotting in jail. The goal before the nationalists is as noble as the one that charged the hearts and souls of the Akalis; there is no reason why those Indians who are anxious to see their country free should not be prepared to make equally great, if not greater, sacrifices.

Guru Gobind Singh, the first of the Akalis, asked his followers to lay down their body, mind, riches and all at the altar of the nation if they desired it to arise a new from the ashes of a ruined and devastated race. "Come to me only if you are prepared to give up all love of life, if you are prepared to make yourself the dust of the feet." That is how the Sikh Guru called his followers to duty. A similar call is made again. If Indians want their country to rise fresh and new from the ashes of its past glory, her sons shall have to make sacrifices unstintingly; they shall have to give up all love of life and ease and comfort. It is only by making a sacrifice of one's body, mind and possessions for the country that one can infuse a new life into its dead bones.

#### SOME IMPORTANT DATES OF THE GURDWARA REFORM MOVEMENT

*12<sup>th</sup> October, 1920.* Some converted untouchables offered sweets at the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple, Amritsar. The priests refused to accept sweets and ask grace for the pilgrims. Afraid of public opinion, the priests left the temple; the Akalis thereupon took the management of the temples in their own hands.

*15<sup>th</sup> November, 1920.* A representative Committee of 125 formally elected to manage the Sikh Gurdwaras. It was registered on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1921.

*25<sup>th</sup> January, 1927.* The priests at Tarn Taran attacked the local Akalis, wounded seventeen of them and killed two.

*20<sup>th</sup> February, 1921.* The priests of Nankana Sahib attacked an Akali *Jatha* of about 100 Sikhs. Almost all of the Akalis were murdered in cold blood. The Akalis were committed to non-violence. None of them resisted the murderers.

*7<sup>th</sup> November, 1921.* The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar took over keys of the Golden Temple from the Manager of the Golden Temple.

*19<sup>th</sup> January, 1922.* The keys returned after thousands of the Sikhs had gone to Jail.

*8<sup>th</sup> August, 1922.* Quarrel about the possession of Guru ka Bagh Gurdwara lands begins.

*17<sup>th</sup> November, 1922.* The quarrel ended after all resources to terrorise the Akali had failed, and thousand of them had been thrown into prisons.

*9<sup>th</sup> July, 1923.* Forced abdication of Maharaja of Nabha. His Highness was interned in Kodaikanal in February 1928.

*1<sup>st</sup> November, 1925.* Second Gurdwara Act came into force.

Footnotes:

1. *The Sikh Studies*, Lahore, 1937.

## THE AKALIS AND SWARAJ<sup>1</sup>

“Ye good people, remember that I was born  
To spread the truth, to help the righteous,  
And to destroy those who practice evil and tyranny.”

In these words Guru Govind Singh expressed the mission of his life. To spread this mission he created the *Khalsa* in his own image. The *Khalsa* could best serve its purpose by supporting right against might, truth against falsehood, the weak and the innocent against the strong and the tyrannical.

The world has always needed the Sikh spirit, but it never needed it so badly as to-day when greed and hatred envelop the whole of the world like a poisonous fog. In Europe, in Asia, everywhere you find people fighting against one another, the strong and the rich crushing the poor and weak. The spectacle is indeed sad and sorrowful; no true Sikh can see all this with hands idle and folded.

For a Sikh the best way to put his trouble to an end is to place himself at the service of humanity, to make every sacrifice for truth and justice. When, Guru Govind Singh baptised the first five Sikhs he baptised them with the water that dripped from a dagger. By this he meant that the Sikhs should unhesitatingly sacrifice all that was best in them for the cause of the Guru and God. They were given the life immortal and called *Khalsa* only when each had gladly offered his life as a sacrifice at the feet of the Guru.

“We are yours, make a sacrifice of us at the altar raised by you to save humanity.” Thus offering their lives and all, for the weak and the oppressed, the first five Akalis became the pioneers of the Sikh faith.

One could regard the Akalis<sup>2</sup> as a new sect, a sect different from others in the sense that it required its followers to make greater sacrifices than any other order or sect had done before. It required its followers to make these sacrifices not for their personal or communal interests but for the interests of others who most needed their help, for the poor, the weak and the oppressed. An Akali could call himself by this name only when he worked in the spirit of the Guru; when he fought not only his own battles but also the battles of those of his brethren who needed his help. An Akali could have no idea of personal gain in his mind; whatever he did, he did for truth and righteousness, for God and His creatures.

For the cause of truth and justice, Guru Govind Singh sacrificed his father, mother, four children, and, in the end, himself. Had he any personal ambition? Did he require any riches or power for himself? His ambition never lay in that direction. The supreme sacrifice he made, was made for us, for those who were weak, for those who were in sorrow, for those who were oppressed.

The same was the case with his followers. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when the Durranis attacked India, on their return march they took with them about a thousand young Hindu and Muhammadan girls as lawful booty. The whole country helplessly watched its shame, but could do nothing. The Sikhs were then holding a meeting at Amritsar. Hindu and Moslems whose homes

were devastated by the Durrani approached the Sikhs and laid their complaint before them in pathetic terms. The Sikhs were moved; their leaders said that it was useless for them to live if crimes of the kind could be perpetrated in the country. All those who were present promptly equipped themselves with arms, and at once started in the pursuit of the Durrani hordes to rescue the girls. The Sikhs came in touch with the Afghan robbers near Gujrat. A hard battle was fought; many were killed; but in the end the Durrani were repulsed and the innocent girls were rescued from their clutches.

One could find many such stories in the history of the Akalis; they were ever ready to lay their lives for the honour of their country, for the honour of those amongst whom they lived. And why should they not have done so? They were the Sikhs, the followers of the Gurus, and as such it was their first duty to make every sacrifice, for the weak, the poor, and the oppressed.

Now and then one hears interested people whispering: why should the Akalis come forward to make such sacrifices when most other Indians desire simply to watch the game? Why should they suffer for others? Why should they be made tools in the hands of other people when these people themselves are so cautious and halfhearted? What shall the Sikhs get if Indians get Swaraj and become free? An Akali's usual reply to all such un-Sikh objections is that freedom is its own reward; if India becomes free, Sikhs become free, Indian dependence today is as much to the shame of the Sikhs as to that of any other. If today Indians suffer from foreign domination, the Sikhs do not suffer any the less.

One could reply like this from the point of view of self-interest. But an Akali often rises to a higher plane, to the plane where the spirit of the Sikh Gurus leads him. When any one asks why the Sikhs should come forward to make more sacrifices than others, an Akali would simply reply: "As Akalis we cannot do otherwise; the best traditions of our race and the example of the Gurus demand that we should make every sacrifice for the honour of the country. Did not Guru Tegh Bahadur selflessly offer himself for the sake of others, for the sake of those who did not follow his religion? In order that the world should be free, that India should be free, that the mist of evil and falsehood be cleared, it is necessary that every Sikh, who calls himself the follower of Guru Tegh Bahadur, should come forward and make a sacrifice of all that he possesses without caring for what others say or do. He is an Akali, and his duty is clear. Akalis would not be Akalis if they served not the oppressed; they were born for that purpose; they were created to stand as saviours of humanity."

It gladdens a Sikh's heart to see that the Akalis have so earnestly associated themselves with the new national movement. The new movement has done so much good to the country as nothing else had ever done before; it has raised national consciousness to a point never before reached. It is true that the movement has so far failed in gaining for Indians the object of their heart; it has not yet got them Swaraj. But the failure does not lie in the movement, it lies in the fact that a sufficient number of Indians have not yet come forward to carry things to their logical conclusion. It is now the considered opinion of every true patriot, that leaving miracles aside, Indians can get Swaraj only through self-help and self-confidence, which is what the new national movement really means.

Indians have not yet come forward to make the required sacrifices which other countries had to make to win freedom. But one can maintain that whenever and wherever the Indians have made the required sacrifices they have come out successful. The efforts of the Akalis in connection with Gurdwara Reform well illustrate the point. The Akalis have proved that even under most brutal and cowardly provocation, Indians can remain non-violent, and that Indians, however hard the others

might try to oppose them, can achieve their object when they have recourse to civil resistance on a large scale. The honour belongs to the Akalis to demonstrate to the world for the first time the truth of Mahatma Gandhi's claims. They have put before the world a practical proof of the assertion that a government can be defeated by non-violent means as by bayonets and guns.

The Akalis have not achieved success for nothing. History shows few spectacles more touching than the sufferings of the Akalis. They were sent to prisons in their thousands; there they were kept standing for hours together in the open sun with their hands tied to trees, they were forced to make ropes even when their hands bled; they were caned and flogged for no offence. Outside the jails they were beaten most brutally; even the most tender parts were hit as hard as only a brute could hit; dozens of them were murdered and burnt alive in the open daylight; Nankana victims were tied to trees, their limbs were cut piece by piece, and then fluttering corpses were drenched in oil and set on fire. It were sufferings like these that brought the Akalis success. The sufferings have not gone in vain; the sons of Guru Govind Singh today feel as victorious as any army in the world. With the sword of humility and self sacrifice they have inflicted as crushing a defeat on their opponents as any saint could wish. All the Sikh Gurdwaras where Akalis were treated as *pariahs* are now in their possession, under their direct control and management.

The Gurdwara question has been settled to the satisfaction of the Sikhs. But the Akalis feel that their duty does not end there. As Akalis they feel they are the custodians of the liberties of the whole human race. As long as India does not become free no Akali could feel satisfied. "This world is the temple of the True Lord, He lives in it for ever and ever," so said the Gurus. Unless this world Gurdwara was free a true Akali shall have no rest.

The Akalis feel that they should impart life to the national movement by their own vitality. They have freed their Gurdwaras from the hands of the unscrupulous priests and their allies, they now desire to free their country from the clutches of grasping and unyielding people.

An Akali feels that the present state of affairs is intolerable; he feels he should no more bear the shame of it silently. True that opponents of Indian freedom have power to persecute Indians in even more inhuman ways than they have employed ever before, but an Akali is prepared to meet boldly and bravely all such persecutions just as his ancestors did in old times. Those who threaten an Akali with prisons full of grinding stones and oil mills, those who threaten him with *lathis* and bayonets, those who threaten him with bombs and guns, should remember that the Akalis of old could survive, and survive triumphantly, even those of their persecutors who had vowed to exterminate them from the face of the earth. The Sikhs were declared outlaws and everybody could kill a Sikh and get a reward for his troubles. The result of these persecutions was that shortly afterwards the Sikhs became the heroes and rulers of the Punjab. If history is to repeat itself, the persecution of the Akalis when engaged in lawful activities shall certainly lead again to the freedom of the country and the defeat of those who persecute them unjustly.

But the Akalis do need a word of caution. Success leads to pride and vanity. The Akalis should take care of danger from this source more than from any other. They should work in an humble spirit, in the spirit of service and self sacrifice. Their hearts should be free from selfishness, malice and hatred; even their worst enemies should receive their good wishes, because as Akalis they cannot but pray even for the welfare of their enemies. "God's glory ever increases; in His Will, Nanak prays for the good of everyone." This is how their daily prayer ends: as followers of Guru Nanak they cannot go against it.

Imbued with the spirit of humility and non-violence, with the spirit of love and sacrifice, the Akalis desire to rise like the companions of Guru Govind Singh to free their country from the reign of irresponsibility and unrighteousness. Sacrifices they shall have to make, sacrifices perhaps greater than they have ever made before, but the example of Guru Govind Singh would always lead them on and on, from success to success.

In the battle of Chamkaur when Prince Ajit Singh fell down fighting for truth. Guru Govind Singh sent forward his second son, Prince Jujhar Singh, to meet the agents of tyranny face to face. After fighting for some time, the Prince felt thirsty and turned his horse back asking the Guru to send him some water. The Guru replied, "No water here for you, my son, do not turn your back to enemy. On other side of the world your brother waits for you with a cup filled with water of life immortal. Go back and quench your thirst there." The Prince promptly obeyed; he went back to the enemy and humbly laid down his life for the *Khalsa*, for you, and for me. This is the spirit in which an Akali works. He regards it his duty to leave aside all personal wants and desires, and die fighting like the brave prince. Let us pray for such Akalis: "Brothers rise; do your duty and prove to the world that you are the true sons of the motherland. Through you shall the reign of truth and freedom spread to all comers of the earth; through you shall the Lord's Universe be filled for ever with peace and glory."

Footnotes:

1. *The Sikh Studies*, pp. 226-35.
2. The Order of Akalis was founded in the days of Guru Govind Singh. They were like Knight Templars of mediaeval Europe. Originally a sect of religious communists, there is not much difference between a Sikh and an Akali these days. Those in the vanguard of the Sikh struggle for freedom are called now Akalis.

## THE KUKA MOVEMENT DR BHAGAT SINGH<sup>1</sup>

Namdhari or Kuka movement was more or less a religious movement but the English bureaucracy dubbed it as a political movement which it was not. The government subjected the Kukas to hardships, privations and strict surveillance. The restrictions clamped on them were removed as late as 1922 on their assurance that they were not opposed to the British government but to the Akalis who had launched a Gurdwara Reform movement and had come into conflict with the British Government time and again.

The founder of the movement *Baba* Balak Singh was a close and a devout follower of *Bhagat* or *Sain* Jawahar Mal. *Sain* Jawahar Mal was a man given to deep meditation and a large number of people in search of spiritual solace visited him every day. *Baba* Balak Singh was deputed to Hazro to look after the Sikh congregations there. He spent most of his time in reciting the *Adi Granth*. Before his death *Baba* Balak Singh enjoined upon his followers, popularly known as *Abhyasi*, to meditate on the *Name of God* day and night, to celebrate marriage according to Anand ceremony and not to spend much on this occasion, to desist from giving dowry, not to eat meat or take intoxicants, not to beg but to earn their livelihood and support their co-religionists and to live a pure and morally upright life.

*Baba* Ram Singh was one of the three most prominent disciples of *Baba* Balak Singh and was chosen to succeed him.

*Baba* Ram Singh was born on February 3, 1816, at Bhaini Araiyan, a village in the Ludhiana district. His father was a carpenter. *Ram* Singh picked up his ancestral profession with dexterity. When he grew into a young man he joined service in the *Khalsa* army at Lahore at the age of 21. His religious bent of mind always kept him steeped in meditation. It is said that he met *Baba* Balak Singh for the first time in 1841 at Hazro. In 1845-46 he left the army and reverted to his parental profession. A little later he started a shop in his village catering to the needs of the people of the village.

*Baba* Ram Singh was a staunch follower of Sikhism and had an unshakable faith in the spiritual leadership of the Sikh Gurus. He wanted to create individuals who should have a strong character and firm convictions and be fearless in action. He wanted his followers to shed off superstitions and cowardice. He desired of the Sikhs to receive the baptism of *Guru Gobind Singh* and he chalked out vigorous plans for *Amrit Prachar*. He was openly hostile to the Sodhis, Bedis, Mahants and Brahmans. He was against idol-worship and urged the members of his Kuka or Namdhari brotherhood to worship only One God. He wanted his followers to live pure and austere life. He is said to have advised his followers in 1863, "If anyone is found guilty of stealing, adultery and other evils like them, do not let him sit in your meetings. If he does so forcibly then pray to God to disable him to do so. Honesty and hard work were made essential for the Kuka mode of living. The Kukas were strictly desired not to encroach upon another's right."

*Baba* Ram Singh was against caste distinctions among his followers. He was a strong exponent of widow-remarriage. He preached against the *Pardah* system amongst women and was in favour of mixed congregations. Thousands of women joined his sect. His followers tied *Sidhi Pag* (straight turban) and kept white woollen rosary.



It is strange that against the advice of Baba Ram Singh the caste system persists among the Kukas even today. They had not been able to do away with untouchability. They do not allow others even to touch their utensils. The Kukas have very fervently discarded the worship of the tombs and mausoleums, Baba Ram Singh more than once, and very emphatically, told his followers that the Guruship was vested in the Sikh Gurus, and, after them, in the holy *Guru Granth Sahib*. He unequivocally told his followers not to call him 'Guru', but since he was a beau ideal in religious matters, some of them took it easy to style him as the "Guru". In the beginning the followers of Baba Ram Singh were called *Jagyasi* or *Abhyasi*. But because in a state of ecstasy, removing their turbans from their heads, they would start dancing and shouting, they were called *Kukas* or Shouters.

The nomenclature of *Namdhari* was given by Baba Ram Singh himself because he enjoined upon his people to practice *Nam*. In the beginning the sphere of his preaching was limited to his native district of Ludhiana. Up to 1862 he spent most of his time in his village Bhaini. A *Namdhari Rabitnama* pronounced very strict injunctions regarding the evil customs of female infanticide, early marriage and barter of daughters in marriage. In a circular letter issued in 1863, worded in strong language, Baba Ram Singh told his followers, "Whoever makes money by the marriage of his daughter is a rascal. Whoever commits infanticide and gives his daughter in barter marriage is an evil doer." He substituted the old marriage system by the *Anand* marriage solemnised in the presence of the Holy *Guru Granth Sahib*. He did away with such terms as dowry, rich clothes, ornaments and every type of superfluous display.

Because of his simple and easily practicable teachings, Baba Ram Singh gathered a large following. Without any valid reasons, the government conceived apprehensions about the outcome of the Movement. Mr. Macnabb, the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot, reported on the 5th of April, 1863, that, "an elderly Sikh of Ludhiana was going about the country with two hundred men whom he drilled at night with sticks instead of muskets, that he boasted of five thousand followers, obeyed no Hakam." The government issued instructions to all the Deputy Commissioners and district police chiefs to keep a vigilant eye on Baba Ram Singh and his followers. Baba Ram Singh visited Amritsar along with his disciples on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1863. The Deputy Commissioner and the police officers found him quite agreeable to their suggestions and amenable to discipline. But on the report of the Officiating Inspector General J.W. Younghusband submitted on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1863, Baba Ram Singh was interned in his village Bhaini by the Punjab government. The internment continued up to the end of 1866. It gave a great fillip to the Kuka movement. During this period the beloved leader of the Kukas could neither go out of his village nor could he address the meetings of the Kukas. In the beginning of 1867 the restrictions were lifted and he was allowed to visit Anandpur on the occasion of Hola Mohalla. According to Government reports his visit to Anandpur went off well. To preach Kuka doctrines, enthusiastic Namdharis were appointed in different parts of the country. They were called *Subas* who strictly adhered to the Kuka code.

In the middle of 1869 some of the Kukas joined the Dogra regiments of Jammu. But neither the Kukas felt happy there, nor the ruler of the state, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, was happy over it. Against the unfounded apprehensions of the Government, the Kukas had no plans to revolt against the British authorities after getting military training in the army of the state. In 1871 the Jammu ruler disbanded the Kuka contingent. Some of the Kukas went to Nepal also and they claimed to have gone there with a view to trading in buffaloes and ponies.

In respect of the cow, the Kukas were more orthodox believers in the sacredness of the animal than the Hindus. Before the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 the cow-slaughter had been strictly banned but with the taking over of the administration by the East India Company the ban on cow-slaughter was lifted. In 1870 a group of enthusiastic Kukas attacked the butchers of Amritsar at the dead of night. Four of the butchers were murdered and three were seriously wounded. Some of the Kukas were later on arrested, four of whom were sentenced to be hanged and two were deported for life. These brave enthusiasts did not let the executioners to get near them. They themselves, the Kukas say, put the nooses around their necks. This sacrifice for a cause, which was dear to the Kukas, inflamed their feelings.

A month after the Amritsar incident, another group of Kukas attacked the slaughter-house of Raikot in the Ludhiana district on the 15th July, 1871, killing three and injuring nine persons. With the help of Patiala and Nabha police, the murderers of the butchers were tracked down. Three of the Kuka leaders were condemned to death. It is very unfortunate that Baba Ram Singh who was against such murderous attacks on the butchers, was held responsible for the same and was recommended to be immediately, banished from the country. The Lieut. Governor of the Punjab was, however, of the opinion that if a sufficient judicial proof to warrant the prosecution of the Kuka leader in the ordinary courts was wanting, the case, as it stood, was not sufficiently strong to justify resort to exceptional procedure reserved for critical emergencies.” But the movements of Baba Ram Singh were placed under restriction.

On 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1872, hundreds of the Kukas met at Bhaini to celebrate the *Lohri* festival. On the conclusion of the festival on the 13th January Baba Ram Singh told his followers to go back to their places and observe perfect peace. But some of the zealot Kukas planned to murder the butchers of Maler Kotla a utter contravention of the advice of their leader Baba Ram Singh. They even went to the extent of making disparaging remarks against their spiritual leader. Straightaway they set off towards Maler Kotla. On their fateful journey, they halted for the night at Rabbo village and planned to get arms from the fort of Sardar Badan Singh at Malaudh. In the fray two of the Kukas were killed and four other injured, and on the other side losses were two killed and two wounded. The Kukas were able to get one double barrelled gun, three swords and two horses. Baba Ram Singh was good enough to immediately, on January 13, intimate the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana as to the designs of some of his hot headed followers. But the authorities instead of saving the situation allowed the tragedy to take place, perhaps so that they might have sufficient ground to crush the Kukas.

Maler Kotla was attacked on January 15 at about 7 A.M. The people of Maler Kotla were alerted as the attack was expected during the night of the 14th January, but on the next morning about one hundred and twenty five Kukas, including two women entered the palace of the Nawab of Maler Kotla. They wanted to get arms from the state armoury. But in the clash that ensued both the parties suffered heavy casualties. The Kukas left the town but were overpowered on their way near Rar village by Niaz Ali, the Naib Nazim of Amargarh of Patiala state. Niaz Ali had a small contingent under his command but with the help of the people of Rar he was able to bring back 68 Kukas to Maler Kotla. Mr. Cowan, the Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana reached Maler Kotla and without formal trial he got forty nine Kukas blown up with guns in the afternoon of January 17. The killed included a young Kuka who following altercation with Cowan was cut to pieces with sword. Cowan informed Forsyth, Commissioner, Ambala Division, about the dastardly action which was approved by the latter. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of January, Baba Ram Singh was ordered to be deported from India by Forsyth. Reaching Maler Kotla on the 18<sup>th</sup> the Commissioner got blown up

by the same guns the remaining sixteen Kukas as well, sparing the lives of the two Kuka women. The Government of India gave their verdict against the illegal executions of the Kukas by Cowan and ordered him to be dismissed from service. Forsyth was removed from his job to a post of lesser responsibility. Keeping Baba Ram Singh in Allahabad Jail for some time he was deported to Rangoon where he died on November 29, 1884.

After Baba Ram Singh, his brother Baba Hari Singh looked after the affairs of the Kukas. He was a man of peaceful disposition and his period was almost uneventful. Nothing happened that could result in the further estrangement of relations between the government and the Kukas. But the police *chowki* at Bhaini continued keeping a watch on them. After Baba Hari Singh's death on May 17, 1906, he was succeeded on the *gaddi* by his son Baba Partap Singh. Like his uncle Baba Ram Singh, the new leader of the Namdhari was also inspired by strong urge for special reforms.

In the twenties of the twentieth century, Gurdwara Reform Movement was started by the Akalis. They wanted to drive out the corrupt Mahants from the gurdwaras and intended to place their administration in the hands of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. The relations between the Akalis and the Kukas had not been cordial for some time because of certain innovations introduced by the Kukas in their code of conduct that were not in strict accordance with the injunctions of the Sikh Gurus. With the passage of time, the gulf between the two continued widening. In the Gurdwara Reform Movement, launched by the Akalis, the tussle was not only between the Akalis and the hereditary Mahants, but the Akalis were also pitted against the government that supported the vested interests of the Mahants. In this struggle the Kukas towed the line with the government who withdrew the restrictions on them in recognition of their support against the Akalis. Baba Partap Singh, in his heart of hearts, did not in any way wish to dissociate himself from the main *Sikh Panth* but, unluckily, he could not do much in that direction. After his death on August 21, 1959, his eldest son Baba Jagjit Singh was deputed to head the sect.

Summing up, we may say that it was essentially a religious and social movement aimed at the abolition of evil social practices like child marriage, use of the intoxicant drugs, non-vegetarian diet, futile customs and cruel practice of female infanticide. They were also against the worship of tombs, mausoleums and idols. By giving up Sikhs tenets and injunctions, the Sikhs were relapsing into the fold of Hinduism from which the Gurus had by persistent efforts pulled them out. The Kukas preached unity of God and brotherhood of man and believed in the equality of sexes. The Kukas have tried to build up the Guruship of Baba Balak Singh and Baba Ram Singh in succession of Guru Gobind Singh. They maintain that Guru Gobind Singh remained alive under the name of Baba Ajapal Singh till the latter installed Baba Balak Singh on the *Guru-gaddi*. This mythical story was cooked by some Namdhari publicists like Nidhan Singh Alam and Inder Singh Chakarvarti. It is a fact beyond doubt that Guru Gobind Singh, before his death, bifurcated the institution of Guruship vesting the spiritual part of it in the *Adi Granth* as finalised by him and the secular one in the *Khalsa*. The former was to be the *Guru Granth* and the latter to be the *Guru Panth*. Therefore, the continuance of the *Guru-gaddi* by the Kukas has been seriously resented by all the non-Kuka Sikhs. This has been the main and vital cause of differences between the Kukas and other Sikhs. It has been said that Baba Ram Singh had instructed his followers not to join government service and government schools and colleges. They should not abide by the government laws and should not wear British manufactured cloth. Probably these things were introduced only after the *Swadeshi* movement was started in India, particularly after Mahatma Gandhi's call for Non-Co-operation Movement. Baba Ram Singh was not against education. He could at the most be slightly prejudicated against a particular type of western education, includes the educational activities of

Christian missionaries aimed at conversions to Christianity. In fact, there were no adequate arrangements of education at that time. Baba Ram Singh was not a person who should revolt against the authorities openly or secretly. He had no political pretensions, rather he was always ready for holding talks with the Government to make his position clear. He accepted the advice of the Government officers at Amritsar, Anandpur, etc. He accepted his internment in his village without grumbling. As such, any boycott of the government educational institutions or foreign cloth or British courts by Baba Ram Singh obviously seems incredible. The Kukas had a fascination for foreign silk which was believed to be known for its 'purity'. The rural people preferred their cases to be settled by the village panchyats rather than by the British courts whose Procedure was lengthy and cumbersome and also the people had to traverse long distances to reach the courts.

Kukas are also said to have an independent postal service, as they were going ahead with activities of social and religious reforms, which included preventing by using force the butchers from cow-slaughter, their plans needed secret communications which were made through personal messengers. This device of the Kukas has been styled as a perfect postal service of their own. Even government postal system, despite their resources, was then far from satisfactory. How could the Kukas operate it flawlessly? But just to keep their plans secret, their messengers had to run about, some times under very arduous circumstances.

In the end it may be said that the movement, in fact, had nothing about it that could at all make it a political movement. Because of the zeal and frenzy with which certain members of the Kuka community were inspired, the Government unnecessarily got panicky and tried to suppress it with force incommensurate with the faults of the violent Kukas. The British officers intentionally raised a bogey to justify their harsh measures against them. The Lieut. Governor of the Punjab wrote to the Government of India on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1872, that he had "no reason to doubt the correctness of Mr. Cowan's belief that a serious outbreak was intended" and a rebellion on the part of the Kukas was apprehended. The Kukas had no arms with them even to kill a few butchers of Amritsar and, later, of Maler Kotla. They could just get a couple of weapons from a police constable at Amritsar and from Badan Singh's fort at Malaudh. They had left Bhaini on their mission against the advice of their leader Baba Ram Singh who had immediately informed the Government authorities at Ludhiana through Bhai Lakha Singh, a close follower of his, of the unhappy intentions of the violent group of Kukas marching towards Maler Kotla. After the incident of Maler Kotla the participating Kukas surrendered to Niaz Ali of Amargarh. Apparently they thought that their mission was fulfilled and without resistance they agreed to march to Maler Kotla to face the consequences of the murderous attacks at Maloudh and Maler Kotla. In view of these circumstances, Cowan's statements that the out-break of Kuka rebellion was just at hand seems simply preposterous. In fact, the Kukas were too eager to convert the society to their way of thinking. The government, which had passed through the turmoil, and stress and strain of uprising of 1875, was on the other hand very vigilant and cautious about the coming up of any movement, religious or social. They would take all pains to bring into disrepute every movement and then justify their suppressive action. The Kuka Movement was basically a religious and social movement which was hampered by the activities of a handful of its over zealous and fanatic followers. If violence had not come into their action against the butchers, and the continuance of the *Guru-gaddi* had not been accepted and propagated as a part of their creed, the movement would have been a marvellous success and would have found favour with a much larger population of the Sikhs.

Footnotes:

1. Professor of History, Mahendra College, Patiala.

## INTRODUCTION OF PANJABI LANGUAGE IN PATIALA STATE

The following documents regarding the introduction of Panjabi language in Gurmukhi Script in the Patiala State were made available to me some time ago by *Shriman* Sardar Trilochan Singh of Patiala.

Panjabi in Gurmukhi script had been the official language of the Patiala State from the very beginning, with occasional use of Persian and Urdu for external correspondence. This was the position up to 1910-11. According to a note by Sardar Trilochan Singh, the *Roznamchas*, the Stores and Stock registers, Salary bill forms, Accounts ledgers, etc. etc., were all maintained in Panjabi. The entire work in the Patiala Army and in His Highness's Household departments-the *Lassi Khana*, *Jalan Khana*, Body-guard, Games, *Rikanajat*, Guest-houses, etc., was done in Panjabi. The *Patiala Gazette*, started on May 29, 1910, (Sunday *Jeth* 16, 1967 Bk.), was issued in Panjabi-the first item published in English was on October 6, 1920-but the *Patiala Samachar*, a weekly newspaper, was published exclusively in Panjabi.

Pandit Daya Kishen Kaul, on his appointment as the Prime Minister of the Patiala State in 1973/74 Bk., wished to bring about a change in the language policy of the Government and ordered English and Urdu to be used in place of Panjabi. But, within a fortnight, the old policy was restored and His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala ordered the continuance of Panjabi to be the official language of the State. This was due to the efforts of the Singh Sabha, Patiala.

### DOCUMENTS

1. Home Department Circular No. 5 of April 26, 1912, published in *Patiala Gazette* dated May 4, 1912.
2. Office Order No. 1128 dated May 2, 1912, issued by the Accountant General, Patiala.
3. Home Department Circular No. 31 of January 26, 1913.
4. Home Department Circular No. 34 of March 15, 1913, published in the *Patiala Gazette* dated March 22, 1913.
5. Proceedings of the meeting of the Hon'ble Judges on June 21, 1930.
6. Proceedings of the meeting of the Hon'ble Judges on July 12, 1930.
7. Education Department Notification No. 33-6, G/65 dated September 14, 1942.
8. Administration report of Patiala State for 1989 Bikrami, 1932-33 A.D.
9. Government Notification, Ordinance No. 1 of 2005, dated 20.8.1948, 5.5.2005 Bk.
10. -do- No. II of the same date.

(Ganda Singh)

hom ifpwrtmYNT

srkUlr nM. 5, qRIk 26-4-1912

vyly vyly isr hukm idqw jWdw ihjw hY ik gurmukI A~Kr pMjwbI  
bolI swry dPqrW ivKy pRclq kIqI jwvy, hYf AOP dI ifpwrMYNTW  
(mihkimAW dy v`fy APsrW) kolON cwhnW pRgt kIqI jWdI hY ik swrIAW  
PwrW gurmukI A`KrW ivKy CpvweIAW jwx qy swry nOkR hox vwilAW dI  
pRICw (iemiqhwn) kr lYxw cwhIdw hY, ik kI auh (gurmukI) ilK pVH  
skdy hn[ jyhVy gurmukI nhIN jwx dy aunHW f iqMn mhIny dw vylw

id`qw jwvy qy eys ipCoN jdoN qIk auh Awpxy Awp f Xog nw bxw lYx  
audoN qIk auhnW dI qlb rok idqI jwvy[

dsqKq  
joigMdr isMG  
hom minstr, irAwsq pitAwlw

## II

Office Order No. 1128 dated 2 May, 1912, 12-1-1969 by A.G. Patiala. Vide Home Minister's Circular No. 5, dated 26.4.12.

Orders have from time to time been passed that Gurmukhi Script and Panjabi Language should be introduced in all the offices. The office members are, therefore, requested to note for compliance.

All employees shall be examined and tested that they can read and write. Those who do not know Gurmukhi are given time of 3 months and after that their pay will be stopped till they qualify themselves. Office forms should be printed bi-lingual in Gurmukhi and English as far as it is practicable at present.

## III

hom ifpwrtmYNt  
srkUlr nM. 31, qRIk 26-1-13  
swfy srkUlr nM. 5, qRIk 26 AprYl, 1912, jwrI hoie 27 ApYRl,  
1912, duAwrw irAwsq dy swry mulwzmW f gurmukI isKx leI hdwieq  
kIqI geI sI, mihkimAW dy v`fy hwkmW f hdwieq kIqI jWdI hY ik auh  
Awpxy ADIn mihkimAW qy stwP dI pRICw krn qy irport krn ik kI kuJ  
qr`kI kIqI geI hY, aunHW mulwzmW dI vI irport pyS krn ik ijnHW  
dsIAW hoeIAW hdwieqW qy Aml nhIN kIqw hY, swry mihkimAW dy v`fy  
APsrW kolon cwhnw pRgt kIqI jWdI hY ik auh irport mhIny dy AMdr  
AMdr Gl dyvy, qW jo sRI 108 hzUr mhwrwjw swihb bhwdR jI dI syvw  
ivKy pyS kIqI jwvy[

shI/hom minstr,  
irAwsq pitAwlw

## IV

pitAwlw gzt ivc pRKwSq hoeI hom ifpwrtmYNt dy srkUlr nM.  
34, imqI 15-3-13 dI nkl jo bIV nM. 3 sYNcI nM. 43 pr imqI 10  
cyq, 69, muqwbk 22-3-1913 f pRKwSq hoieAw[

hom ifpwrtmYNt  
srkUlr nM. 34, qRIk 15-3-13  
ies mihkmy ny srkUlr nM. 5 qRIk 26-4-12 Anuswr sB AhudydwrW  
qoN hI gurmukI ilKx qy pVHn leI cwhnw pRgt kIqI geI sI ijs f hux  
iek vrHw ho c`ukw hY AsIN srkUlr nM. 31, qRIk 26-1-13 Anuswr

hswieq kIqI sI ik d&qrW dy sB mulwzmW dw iek mhIny dy AMdr AMdr  
iemiqhwn ilqw jwvy[ swnUM pqw nhIN hY ik kI nots ilqw igAw hY,  
ikauNik hux pUty vyly dI AigAw id`qI jw cukI hY qy iek vrHw kw&I  
sI hr sUrq ivc hux hukm id`qw jWdw hY ik d&qrw dy swry mulwzmW  
dI mhInw jyT 1970 dI qlb pws nw kIqI jwvy jdoN qIk ik mihkmy dy  
v`fy APsr dw srtIi&kyt ibl dy nwl nw tWikAw hoieAw hovy ik d&qr  
dy sB mulwzm gurmukI cMgI qrHW ilK pVH skdy hn[

dsqKq  
hom minstr,  
irAwsq pitAwlw

#### V

Proceedings of a meeting of the Hon'ble Judges held in the chambers of the Hon'ble Chief Justice at 10.15 a.m. on Saturday, the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1930.

#### PRESENT

1. The Hon'ble the Chief Justice (Sir Shadi Lal)
2. The Hon'ble Sir Alan Boradway, Kt.
3. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Addison.
4. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Tek Chand (now Sir).

Punjab Government semi-official letter No. 14602, Judl. dated the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1930, was read and it was resolved that the Local Government be informed that the Judges have no objection to the adoption of Punjabi as an alternative Court language.

#### VI

Proceedings of a meeting of the Hon'ble Judges held on in the Chambers of the Hon'ble the Chief Justice at 10.15 a.m. on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1930.

#### PRESENT

1. The Hon'ble the Chief Justice (Sir Shadi Lal)
2. The Hon'ble Sir Alan Boradway, Kt.
3. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Addison.
4. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Tek Chand (now Sir).
5. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Coldstream.
6. The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Agha Haider.

Resolution No. 7 passed at the meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup>, of June last was further considered. The Proposal of the Chief Khalsa Diwan on the question of adopting Punjabi as an alternative Court language was that certain Judicial forms only should be made bilingual. The Judges were of opinion that if the Local Government favour the introduction of such forms, they have no objection and would suggest in that case that those forms which in the United Provinces are printed in Urdu and Hindi might in the Punjabi be printed in Urdu and Punjabi; the script used in the Punjabi portion of the form should be Gurmukhi.

#### VII



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PATIALA

Notification

No. 33-6, G/65

Dated 30-5-1999/14.9.42

Published in His Highness Govt. Gazette, Patiala, Assauj 5, 1999/ 14-9-1942.

In continuation of this office circular No. 45, dated 4-4-1999, all concerned are hereby informed that the Ijlas-i-Khas have been graciously pleased to order vide their orders No. 1433/290 A.R. 99, dated 29.8.1942, that Punjabi should be made compulsory in all Primary and Middle schools and the Primary and Middle Departments of all High Schools in the state as per scheme Annexure 'A':

ANNEXURE 'A'

Scheme regarding instruction in Modern Indian Languages in all schools in the state up to the Middle standard examination.

I. All boy's schools excepting those in Narnaul and Hill Distt.

A-

Primary stage class I to IV  
with effect from 1999

1. Punjabi and
2. Hindi or Urdu

B-

Middle stage Classes V to VIII.

Class V Pbi. compulsory from 1999  
Class VI from 2000  
Class VII from 2001  
Class VIII from 2002

- Note
1. From 1999 elementary Reading and writing of Punjabi will be compulsory in VI, VII and VIII classes.
  2. A Second Modern Indian Language i.e. Hindi or Urdu may be taken as one of the elective subjects.

II. Schools in Narnaul and Hill Districts

A Middle stage

Primary stage class I to IV

1. Punjabi and
2. Hindi or Urdu

Classes V to VIII

Classes V Punjabi Compulsory.

" from 2002

Classes VI " from 2003

Classes VII " from 2004

Classes VIII "from 2005

Class

Class I From 2000

Class II From 2000

Class III From 2000

Class IV From 2001

Note: A Second Modern Indian Language i.e., Hindi or Urdu may be taken as one of the elective subjects.

Sd/- K.C. Bose

Director of Public Instruction, Patiala.

VIII

Copy of an extract from the administration report of Patiala State for 1989 Bikrmi, 1932-33 A.D. as published by the authority on page 2 in the same.

## LANGUAGE

The bulk of the population speak Punjabi. Other languages spoken in the state are Urdu, Hindi and Hill dialect. His Highness' government realise the desirability of introducing Punjabi as a court language in the State and efforts are being made to prepare an authentic glossary and a system of technical and legal terminology in Punjabi to attain this object.

## IX

The Patiala & East Punjab States Union Administration Ordinance 2005.

Ordinance No. 1 of 2005, dated 20-8-48/5-5-2005.

Enforcement of laws of  
Patiala State in the Union

As soon as the administration of any Convenanting State has been taken over by the Raj Pramukh as aforesaid, all laws, Ordinances, Acts, Rules, Regulations, Notifications, Hidyats, Firman-i-Shahi, having force of law in Patiala State on the date of commencement of this Ordinance shall apply mutatis mutandis to the territories of the said State and with effect from that date all laws in force in such convenanting State immediately before that date shall be repealed.

## X

Government of the Patiala & East Punjab States Union, Ordinance No. II of 2005, dated 20-8-48, 5-5-2005.

Language of the High Court

The language of the High Court shall be English and Punjabi in Gurmukhi Script.

## EXEMPTION OF KIRPAN FROM RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE ARMS ACT

### I GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HOME DEPARTMENT

(i)

Notification of the Government of India Home Department, Judicial, No. 950, dated Simla, the 25th June, 1914.

In exercise of the power conferred by section 27 of the Indian Arms Act 1878 (XI of 1878), the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct that the following amendment shall be made in the Indian Arms Rules 1909, namely:

In schedule II after the entry relating to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the following shall be inserted, namely:

The Punjab (Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs), ALL.

(Sd) H. Wheeler,  
Secretary to the Government of India

(ii)

Notification of the Government of India Home Department, Judicial, No. 1118, dated Simla, the 17th July, 1914.

In exercise of the power conferred by section 27 of the Indian Arms Act 1878 (XI of 1878) the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct that the following amendment shall be made in the Indian Arms Rules, 1909, namely:

In schedule II after the entry relating to Coorg, the following shall be added:

The Province of Delhi (Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs), ALL.

(iii)

Notification of the Government of India Home Department, Judicial, No. 2248, dated Simla, the 27th October, 1914.

In exercise of the power conferred by section 27 of the Indian Arms Act 1878 (XI of 1878), the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct that the following amendment shall be made in the Indian Arms Rules, 1909, namely:

In schedule II in the second and third columns against entry (a) relating to the province of Burma, after item (b), the following shall be inserted namely:

Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs. . . . All.

(iv)

*Letter No. 356 dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1917, from G.M. Young Esq., Undersecretary to the Government of India,*

*to the Hony. Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2377 dated the 15th June, 1917, conveying the thanks of the Sikh community for *the exemption of Kirpans throughout British India from the operation of the Indian Arms Act, 1878.*

The Gazette of India, Simla, Saturday May 19, 1917.  
Home Department Notification No. 242

## POLICE

Simla, the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1917. In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 27 of the Indian Arms Act (XI of 1878), the Governor General in Council is pleased to direct that the following amendment shall be made in schedule II of the Indian Arms Rules 1909, as subsequently amended, namely:

- (1) In item No. 1 (area-British India) the following shall be added in columns (2) and (3) respectively as entry No. (XI), Kirpans possessed by or carried by the Sikhs:
- (2) The entries referring to Kirpans in items Nos. 9,10,11 and 16 (areas-United Provinces, Punjab, Burma, North West Frontier, and Delhi Provinces), respectively shall be deleted, also see No. 242, from Gazette of India, Simla, May 19, 1917.

## II

### PESHAWAR

*Memorandum No. 1060 G. Dated 26-2-17 from the Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Peshawar, to the Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.*

In reply to his letter No. 40W, dated the 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1917, the undersigned is directed to inform the Honorary Secretary, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, that under the Government of India Home Department Notification No. 963 dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1916, the Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs in the North Western Frontier Provinces have been exempted from all directions and prohibitions contained in the Arms Act.

## III

### BAHAWALPUR STATE

#### (i)

*From the Secretary (Anokh Singh Nidharak), Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, to the Chief Secretary to H.H. the Nawab Sahib of Bahawalpur State, No. 1386/9, January 19, 1928.*

I have the honour to bring to your kind notice that several reports have been received in this office of Shiromani Akali Dal that Sikhs from the Punjab and other provinces outside Bahawalpur State, while crossing the Bahawalpur State on their way to Bombay, etc., are arrested and convicted under Arms Act for wearing Kirpan. A recent report says that Bhai Mool Singh, Granthi of Multan, while going to Sukhur alighted at Bahawalpur city for some business and was arrested on 20.12.27 for wearing Kirpan.

As Kirpan is a religious symbol of the Sikhs and is exempted from the Arms Act by the Government of India, it is requested that Bhai Mool Singh may kindly be released and his Kirpan restored. It is further requested that you will be pleased to get the exemption of Kirpan from all restrictions notified in the Bahawalpur State.

(ii)

*From the S.A. Dal, Amritsar, to the Private Secretary to H.H. the Nawab of Bahawalpur State, No. 1710/9 - January 20, 1928.*

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of Resolution No. 9 passed at the General meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal held on 10-4-28 for your best consideration and necessary action. It is further requested that you will be pleased to notify exemption of Kirpan from all restrictions laid on it in your state.

(iii)

*From the same to H.H. the Nawab of Bahawalpur State, Bahawalpur, September 18, 1928.*

Very recently Sikhs have been persecuted in the Bahawalpur State for wearing Kirpan, one of the religious emblems of the Sikhs. Sardar Gurmukh Singh of Minchnabad was confined in Jail for 4 days and fined Rs. 10/- besides the confiscation of Kirpan. On 27-8-28 Sardar Waryam Singh of Ghollian was also arrested at Khairpur and sent by the Judge at Khairpur to take his trial before the Munsif at Bhawalpur. Probably your Highness is aware that the Kirpan is exempted from Arms Act for the Sikhs throughout the British India.

Our representations and reminders in several previous cases to your Highness's Chief Secretary and the Private Secretary having failed to elicit and reply, I am now addressing Your Highness directly in the hope that Your Highness will take steps to remove this grievance of Sikh subjects of the Bahawalpur State. If a notification exempting Kirpan from the operation of the Arms Act in your state be made by Your Highness, it is sure to prevent any misunderstanding or wrongful arrest in the future.

(iv)

*From Major Sheikh Hofizullah, B.A., LLB., Military Secretary to the Nawab Sahib Bahadur, Bahawalpur to the Secretary, the Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, No. 654, 19-10-28.*

With reference to your letter No. 2025, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1928, addressed to His Highness the Nawab Sahib Bahadur of Bahawalpur, I am directed to state that under the Rules in force in the State a Kirpan not more than 9 inches in length is exempt from the operation of all prohibitions and directions contained in the Arms Act. A Kirpan longer than the prescribed length is considered as prohibited weapon with in the State and the person wearing it, is dealt with under the Arms Act.

(v)

*Telegram, Macleodganj Road, Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar.*

Sardar Jaswant Singh Danewalia General Secretary, Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, Punjab Ryasti Praja Mandal, has been arrested by State Police as he possessed long Kirpan, he has refused to give any bail nor he will produce any witness. -Arjan Singh, Secy. Akali Jatha, Bahawalpur State.

(vi)

*Telegram from SAD, Asr., to Nawab Sahib Bahawalpur, Nov. 7, 1928.*

Shromani Akali Dal greatly agitated over arrest its General Secretary Sardar Jaswant Singh Danewalia for carrying Kirpan. Akali Dal regards State Police action condemnable. Kirpan sacred Sikh symbol. Much sensation prevails among Sikhs.

(vii)

*Telegram, Macleodganj Rd., November 8, 1928, to SAD, Asr.*

Jaswant Singh decision date 10<sup>th</sup> Minchinabad. Send responsible person on date. Arjan Singh.

(viii)

*Telegram, Macleodganj Road, November 15, 1928, to SAD, Asr.*

Mangal Singh imprisoned one month in Bahawalpur Munsif s Court. Kirpan seized on eighth. -Arjan Singh, Secretary, Akali Jatha.

(ix)

*Telegram, Macleodganj Road, November 29, 1928, Akali Dal. Asr.*

Munsif Bahawal Nagar decision, Sardar Waryam Singh Gholian fined Rs. 30/- or 3 months rigorous imprisonment. He has preferred Jail. -Arjan Singh.

(x)

*Telegram, November 25, 1928, to Gurudwara, Amritsar.*

Hearty congratulation. Deputation efforts fruitful. Nawab Sahib has kindly agreed remove all restrictions Kirpan and release prisoners. -Mangal Singh.

(xi)

By a notification published in Bahawalpur State local paper *Sadiq-ul-Akbar* dated the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1928. All restrictions on carrying Kirpans by the Sikhs were removed. Army Regulations India Vol. APP. III.

Rules relating to the possession of private arms by Indian officers, British, and Indian and other ranks.

Rule No. 17 Sikh Kirpans: All Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs while serving in the army are exempt from the operation of the Indian Arms Act 1878, and Indian Arms Rule 1924 provided they conform to the measurements laid down, viz. a maximum length of 11½ inches.

#### IV

#### SINDH

Government of Sindh Home Department, Resolution No., 1529-H/39(I)

Sind Secretariat, Karachi, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 1941.

Resolution: In supersession of all previous orders on the subject Government are pleased to remove the ban on the possession of 'Kirpans' with blades exceeding nine inches in length by Sikhs in the province of Sind.

2. The Director of information should be requested to issue a Press Note on the subject.

By Order of His Excellency the Governor,  
Sd/- C.B.B. Clee.  
Chief Secretary to Government

To,

Inspector General of Police Sind, District, Magistrates, District Judge, Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, Registrar Chief Court, Superintendent of Police, Director of Information Sind, Departments of the Secretariat.

V  
UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA & OUDH

(i)

Letter No. 876/VI-1397/1916 dated the 22-2-17 from the Secretary to Government United Provinces, to the Secretary Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar.

With reference to the correspondence ending with your letter No. 639, dated the 1st February, 1917, I am directed to inform you that the necessary orders have been issued by the Government of India, exempting Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs, within the area of United Provinces from all the prohibition and directions contained in the Indian Arms Act XI of 1878.

(ii)

Kirpans possessed or carried by Sikhs within the area of United provinces are exempted from the operations of all the prohibitions contained in the Indian Arms Act XI of 1878. "See Notification No. i.618 (Police) 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1916, published in Gazette of India July 15, 1916, page 970, Part I and G.O. No. 1278-VIII-221 dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1922.

In 1940 a Sikh named Sher Singh, son of Moti Singh resident of Bhampur Ilaqa Surkha, District Farrihabad, was challaned for possessing a sword besides a small Kirpan by the police. Babu Daya Shanker Mathur, Magistrate 1st Class, acquitted the accused on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1940, holding that word 'Kirpan' and 'Sword' conveyed one and the same meaning and that a Sikh could carry more than one Kirpan."

VI  
BIHAR

By Notification No. 394-821-VI dated the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1928, the Governor-in-Council for Bihar was pleased to direct that the prohibitions and directions contained in the Indian Arms Act XI of 1878 shall not operate in the case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans.

No restrictions of shape, size or length of a Kirpan is prescribed.

VII  
INDORE STATE

By Hazur Sri Shanker Order No. III dated the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1932, the Sikhs were exempted under rule 9 (I) of Indore Registration of Arms Rules 1932 from the operation of the said Rules in respect of the Kirpan possessed by every Sikh as one of the five essential symbols of Sikhism.

No restriction of shape, size or length of a Kirpan is prescribed.



VIII  
CENTRAL PROVINCES

(i)

*From S.H.Y. Oulsnam, Esq., I.C.S., Under Secretary to Government, Central Provinces, to the Secretary, the Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, No. 638/855/VI, Nagpur, November 25, 1927 (Police Deptl.)*

With reference to your letter No. 1023/9, dated the 17th October, on the above subject, I am directed to forward for information copies of Notifications Nos. 634/855/VI and 635/855-VI, dated the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1927, exempting Sikhs from the operation of the provisions of section 13 of the Indian Arms Act throughout the Central Provinces and Berar in respect of their going armed with Kirpans whose blades do not exceed nine inches in length.

GOVERNMENT OF THE CENTRAL PROVINCES, POLICE DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION NO.  
634/855-VI dated Nagpur, the 25<sup>th</sup> Nov., 1927.

In exercise of the powers conferred by the provisions in column 3 against entry 1 of the table appended to Schedule II of the Indian Arms Rules, 1924, and in modification of the Police Department Notification No. 1-111-VI, dated the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1921, the Governor in Council is pleased to direct that the prohibition and directions of section 13 of the Indian Arms Act, 1878, shall not operate throughout the Central Provinces in the case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans whose blades do not exceed nine inches in length.

(ii)

No. 635/855-VI. — In exercise of powers conferred by the provisions in column 3 against entry 1 of the table appended to Schedule II of the Berar Arms Rules, 1924, and in modification of the Police Department Notification No. 13-69-E-VI, dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1921, the Governor in Council is pleased to direct that the prohibitions and directions of Section 13 of the Indian Arms Act (XI, of 1878), as applied to Berar, shall not operate through Berar in the case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans whose blades do not exceed nine inches in length.

(iii)

*From H.C. Gowan, Esquire, Chief Secy. to Government Central Provinces, to the Secretary, Shromani Akali Dal Amritsar, No. C/639/821/VI, Pachmari, May, 1928.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1217/9, dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1927, in which you ask that the order restricting the size of the Kirpans to 9 inches may be rescinded, and in reply to say that the Governor in Council has been pleased to accede to your request. A notification is being issued removing the restriction in question.

NOTIFICATION

No. 393-821-VI, Nagpur, the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1928.

In exercise of the power conferred by the provisions in column 3 against entry 1 of the table appended to Schedule II of the Indian Arms Rules, 1924, and in modification of the Police Department Notification No. 7-III-VI, dated the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1921, the Governor in Council is pleased to direct that the prohibitions and directions of section 13 of the Indian Arms Act, 1878, shall not operate throughout the Central Provinces in the case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans.

Police Department Notification No. 634-855-VI, dated the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1927, is hereby cancelled.

By order of the Governor in Council.

H.C. Gowan  
Chief Secretary to Government

(iv)

*From R.K. Nehru, Esq., undersecretary to Government Central Provinces to the Secretary Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, No. 621/ 766/VI, Police Deptt. , Nagpur, September 25, 1928.*

In compliance with the request contained in your letter No. 2023/9, dated the 15th September, 1928, I am directed to forward herewith a copy of each of the Notification Nos. 393/821-VI, and 394/821-VI, dated the 5th June, 1928, regarding the exemption of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans from the prohibitions and direction of Section 13 of the Indian Arms Act, 1878, throughout the Central Province and Berar.

By Notification No. 393-821 VI dated the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1928 the Governor-in-Council for Central provinces was pleased to direct that the prohibitions and directions contained in the Indian Arms Act (XI of 1878) shall not operate in the case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans.

No restriction of shape, size or length of a Kirpan is prescribed.

(v)

In order to get the position made further clear the Secretary, C.P. and Berar Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Nagpur, addressed an application to the Inspector General of Police, Nagpur, to which the following reply was sent by Mr. F.C. Taylor, D.I.G., by letter No. 3879 dated 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1936.

“Government has recently issued orders that the prohibitions and directions of section 13 of the Indian Arms Act shall not operate in case of Sikhs going armed with Kirpans, from this it follows that Kirpans are not “arms” within the meaning of that section. Sikhs can, therefore, carry any number of any size of Kirpans.

## IX BOMBAY

By Notification No. 1234-Political, dated the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1925, Home Department, Kirpans not exceeding nine inches in length carried by Sikhs were exempted from the operation of all prohibition & restrictions contained in the Indian Arms Act (XI of 1878). But the new notification reproduced below removes the restriction on size of the Kirpan now:

Notification No. 8985/4. Home Deptt., Bombay, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1946.

In exercise of the powers conferred by the Provincial Government by entry No. 1 of the table sub-joined to Schedule II appended to the Indian Arms Rules, 1924, the Government of Bombay is pleased to amend Government Notification in Home Department (Political) No. 1234-Pol. dated the 20<sup>th</sup> July/3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1925, as follows, viz.:

In the table appended to the said notification for entry 3-A the following entry shall be substituted:

3-A	The whole of Bombay Presidency	(a) Kirpan possessed Sikhs and carried by Sikh	All except those contained in Sections 13 & 15
		(b) Kirpans All other than Sikhs	All

X

MADRAS

By his letter No. 5806 (0) G-I dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1946, the Secretary to Government of Madras informed the Shromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar that except in the District Malabar, the possession of Sword of whatever length including Kirpan does not require a license, by virtue of the exemption in entry in the table under Schedule II to the Indian Arms Rule, 1924, from the operation of the prohibition and restrictions contained in the Indian Arms Act, 1878. As regards Malabar District it stated in the said letter that neither a Sikh nor any other person except those who have been exempted under Schedule I to the Indian Arms Rules may possess any sword or Kirpan without a license.

XI

BURMA

(i)

*From W.T. Politics, District Magistrate, Shwebe, to the Headquarters Magistrate, Shwebe, July 7, 1927.*

I have the honour to lay a complaint under section 19 (e) Indian Arms Act 1878, against Dalip Singh, son of Narain Singh, at present residing at Sikh Temple Ye-U, in that on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1927, at 4-45 p-m., Kanbya Railway Station, Tabayin Township, he was found going armed with a Kirpan (exhibit) which is in excess of 9 inches the maximum length permitted under Schedule 11.3 (vi) of the Burma Arms Manual.

The offence committed by Ram Singh is aggravated by his refusal to surrender his Kirpan. He laid his hand on the handle and said, he would not give it up, but would suffer arrest if such was ordered. He was accordingly arrested and after some hours in custody released on bail, after surrender of the Kirpan.

(ii)

*From H.A. Thornton, Esquire, C.I.E., I.C.S., Commissioner of Sagaing Division, Sagaing to the Deputy Commissioner, Shwebe, General Department Letter No. 9777/5A-79, dated 8<sup>th</sup> August 1927.*

With reference to your General Department letter No. 6696/ 2P-4 dated the 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1927, I have the honour to say that you may withdraw the prosecutions under section 19 (e) Arms Act against the two Sikhs referred to on the ground that they had been wearing their Kirpans at a religious function.

(iii)

*From Mr. W.B. Brander, Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma (Home & Political Deptt. ), to the Secretary. Shromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, Police Deptt., No. 59-C22, Rangoon, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> Nov., 1927.*

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 1023/9, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> October,

1927, forwarding a copy of resolution No. 252A passed at a meeting of the Working Committee of the Shromani Akali Dal held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1927, and a copy of the Government of India, Home Department, Notification No. 242, dated the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1917.

## THE RAJ KAREGA KHALSA COUPLET GANDA SINGH

The *Raj kareā Khālsā* couplet is at times misunderstood and misconstrued. It has been dubbed as an innovation of the ‘neo-Sikhs’ of the Singh Sabha persuasion. The motive behind it in the pre-independence days was to create in the minds of British officials suspicions about the political aspirations of the Sikh community. And, now, it is, not unoften, misrepresented by anti-Sikh political parties as a communal demand against the popular Indian Government. Both are unhistorical misconstructions. The words of the couplet are clear. There is no ambiguity about what they mean. It says:

*Rāj karegā Khālsā, yāqī rahe nā koe,  
Khawār hoe sabh milenge bache sarn jo hoe.*

which means:

The *Khalsa* shall rule, no hostile refractory shall exist.  
Frustrated, they shall all submit, and those who come in for shelter shall be protected.

Just as all other historical allusions in the Sikh prayer refer to past history, so does this couplet refer to the days of the later Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah, Farrukh Siyar, etc. It is a composition of the first quarter of the eighteenth century. It forms a part of the *Tankh-wāh-Nāmāh* of Bhai Nand Lal, who, after the death of Emperor Bahadur Shah in 1712, returned to his home-town of Multan and died there. It was, evidently, first sung by the *Khalsa* during the days of Banda Singh Bahadur (1710-16) who was the first Sikh political leader to declare the independence of his people in the Punjab. Bahadur Shah, the son and successor of Aurangzeb, not only then declared the Sikhs to be rebels, but also issued edicts to his *fauj-dārs* on December 10, 1710, “to kill the disciples of Nanak (the Sikhs) wherever they were found—*Nānak-prastān rā har jā kih ba-yaband baqatī rasan and [Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla]*.” This was repeated by Emperor Farrukh Siyar (1713-19) in almost the same words, given in the *Muftah-ut-Tawārikh*, p. 398. According to this order, the Sikhs were to be wiped out of existence wholesale. No trace of them was to be left in their own land, their birth-place, the land of their ancestors. This was a tyranny of the worst type. And no self-respecting son of the land, much less the Sikhs, could stand it, however great and numerous were the odds pitched against him. The *Singhs* of Guru Gobind Singh were not frightened by these edicts. They had been cast in a different mould and had received the baptism of the double-edged sword (*Khande dī Pahl*). They knew the land was theirs and it was their right to live therein. They had only to assert this right. Tyranny has no long life, and tyrants perish under the weight of their own sins. It was only the question of time, and the Sikhs would come to their own. And they proved to be right. The *rajs* of the *Khalsa* was established and they successfully broke the first sod in the ultimate conquest and independence of the Panjab. It was then when they were persecuted and done to death for aspiring to *raj karo-to* rule-in their homeland that, to keep up their spirits, with their minds strengthened by faith and emboldened by constant prayer, the Sikhs sang this couplets: *Rāj karegā Khālsā yāqī rahe nā koe*. It is true that they had to suffer very heavily and had to make innumerable sacrifices for over half a century. But they knew their cause was right and success would ultimately be theirs. Throughout this period of waiting they sang this couplet praying for the fulfilment of their aspirations. And when they had become independent, they sang it in commemoration of their success and as a reminder of their promise of protection to those who sought it.

With the coming in of the British to the Panjab in 1846-49, the Sikh aspirations for *Swaraj* were once again revived, and with it the justification of the recitation of this couplet. The dread of the Feringees suggested to some of the loyalists, afraid of being listed as rebels, a compromise in giving to the word *Khālsā* an alternate meaning as 'pure'. They wished to convey to the new rulers that the *Khālsā* had then no political ambitions or aspirations to rule in the country and that the couplet appended to their prayer only meant that the 'pure' shall rule.

It is not always correct, particularly in the context of this couplet, to translate the word *Khālsā* as 'pure'. The word for pure is *khālis*. Derived, of course, from *khālis*, Khalsa is, in fact, a technical term which in the days of Mughal administration meant inalienable lands or revenues directly looked after or administered by the government of the king. Guru Gobind Singh applied this word specifically to those of the Sikhs whom he had baptized as *Singhs*, the lions. To them he gave the name of *Khālsā*, 'his own'. "The term," wrote, H.H. Wilson in 1855 in his *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms*, "has been of late familiar as the collective denomination of the Sikh government and people." The recitation of the *Raj karegd Khālsā* has provided to the Sikh people with a source of inspiration and strength in their social and political undertakings in the past and shall always act as an incentive for them in the service of the country. With the blessing of God, India is now a free country. The old aspirations of the Sikhs have come to be fulfilled in the establishment of the People's *Raj*, the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India, with equality of status and of opportunity to all sections of the people of the country.

In the present democratic set-up in India, the people of the country have to be educated in democratic principles of government to be able to organize themselves in groups and parties to take upon their shoulders, or to share with others, the burden of the governance of the country as and when they are called upon to do so. Like the majority group of the Hindus and the largest minority group of the Muslims, the Sikhs are as well a group of people in the country and have a right to aspire to political power as a group by itself or in collaboration with others. They have for this purpose to educate the constituents of their group. The Sikh group can best be educated for the service of the country on the lines laid down and traditions set up by the great Gurus and heroes and martyrs whose glories are recounted in the prayer. The *Raj Karegā Khālsā* is an inseparable part of the Sikh prayer and of their past aspirations and traditions to serve their country-men, and its recitation reminds them of their duties and responsibilities not only towards their own people but also towards the entire family of Mother India whose own flesh and blood they are.

## THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE PUNJAB THE REV. C.H. LOEHLIN<sup>1</sup>

Christianity is one of the old religions of India, probably ranking next to Hinduism in length of sojourn in India. A persistent tradition has it that Thomas, one of the original Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, came to South India in the First Century A.D. and founded Christian Churches: Thus far this tradition has been neither proved nor disproved. It is known, however that Nestorian Christians were to be found in south India in the Fourth Century, and they have been there ever since.<sup>2</sup>

In the North, the Jesuit Roman Catholics sent skilled theologians to the Emperor Akbar's court at Fatehpur Sikri as honoured guests. Among these were Rudolfo Acquaviva, Emmanuel Pinheiro, Jerome Xavier, Benedict Goes. "Akbar was profoundly impressed, sufficiently so to let the Jesuits open a church and a college in Agra with full freedom to baptize and preach to his subjects."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, we are told in the *Akbarnamah* records that a certain 'Padre Rodolph' proposed to carry a Bible through the fire, providing his 'ulama rival did the same with the Quran. This the 'ulama declined to do, at which the Emperor Akbar was "much annoyed."<sup>4</sup> We hear of the activity of the Jesuit priests also at Delhi and Lahore.

In Guru Nanak's time a generation earlier "these were not only Hindus and Moslems, but also Parsis, Jews, and most likely, Christians among the 'saints' in those parts of India."<sup>5</sup> It is hard to imagine such an indefatigable traveller and earnest seeker as Guru Nanak not meeting these Christian saints. Significantly, the first great Christian scholar and translator, William Carey, had by 1819 translated the *New Testament* and part of the *Old Testament* into Gurumukhi Punjabi. Thus from early days there seems to have been contact and a mutual attraction between these two faiths.

### DIFFICULTIES OF EARLY MISSION

Roman Catholic missions to the Punjab, though earlier than Protestant Missions; seem to have been temporary and sporadic. Organized and sustained Protestant missions to South India date from the Eighteenth century, and to the Punjab from early in the Nineteenth Century. It was very difficult to arouse the churches of Europe and America to the need of sending out missionaries. Many thought, with Martin Luther, that Christ's Great Commission, to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Gospel of Matthew 28; 20) applied only to the original twelve disciples to whom it was addressed. Others pointed out the numerous passages in the Bible where it was declared that these Good Tidings were for "all people", and gradually the conscience of the Christian church was aroused. Even so, it was difficult to get recruits. The newly formed Methodist Missionary Society appropriated money for a mission to India for three successive years, until finally an immigrant to the United States from Ireland, William Butler, volunteered, soon to be followed by James Mills Thoburn, Edwin Wallace Parker, and George Bowen, so the mission was launched in 1856<sup>6</sup>. The United Presbyterians of North America likewise experienced difficulty in getting missionaries, and then in supporting the few who were sent out. Rev. Andrew Gordon, their first missionary to the Punjab, writes that at one time he had only \$ 17 to support himself and the work.<sup>7</sup> The Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church was started on its Punjab Mission largely through the influence of laymen who were often Military and Civil officers in India.<sup>8</sup> Many of the ecclesiastics held out against missions, and "during the early years of the Church Missionary Society the bishops declined to ordain its candidates for service abroad, and it was obliged to look to Germany for its missionaries." (Encyclopaedia of Missions, p. 164<sup>9</sup>) All these organizations have been conducting their

influential missions for a century or more now.

Then, when they did reach the shores of India and make the long trip by road or boat to the interior, the missionaries were opposed and hindered by the East India Company. The first Anglican missionaries were thus addressed by their sending Committee: "Whence, we may ask, comes the blight upon your Indian Missions? Why are the Indians last, and the Negroes and New-Zealanders first? Because upon the soil of India for a century and a half, a Christian Government frowned upon all attempts to preach the Gospel to their pagan subjects."<sup>10</sup> William Carey, one of the great scholars and translators of India, was not allowed by the East India Company to stay in Calcutta, but eventually found an asylum at Serampore which was a principality of Denmark. "Nothing seemed to alarm a certain class in England and Bengal as the circulation of the Scriptures among the natives of India. One of these bitter assailants wrote that the giving away of 200 copies of the gospel of Matthew in the Mahratta language 'was likely to produce *another Mahratta war*.'"<sup>11</sup>

#### EARLY TRAVEL

The Rev. John. C. Lowrie, the first Protestant missionary to the Punjab, thus describes his trip up the Ganges from Calcutta by boat in the summer of 1834:

July 28 - The boatmen "tracked" a good part of the way; that is, six or seven men went ashore, and pulling with a long rope, drew the boat along at the rate of two miles an hour. It is hard work; as the poor fellows have to cross nullahs or arms of the river, frequently so deep as to require them to swim, and to walk often knee deep in mud, all the time exposed to a hot sun. . . . . To keep their rope from becoming entangled in the bushes and from dragging heavily through the water, they make it fast, almost fifteen feet above the deck, to the mast. As a considerable part of the vessel in the water is before the mast to which the rope is attached, and as the rudder is too small to be of much use, when the current happens to be very strong there is great danger that the prow will be forced to one side or the other; and then there is still greater danger that the boat will be pulled by the men at the rope on its "beam ends," as the sailors say, on its side, and go down to the bottom. I describe the process minutely, for my most frequent dangers, and some of the greatest, were from this source. In many places the current dashes along with immense force at the rate of seven or eight miles-an hour. The "trackers", bent almost to the-ground, strain every muscle to pull the boat. The prow suddenly veers from the right direction; the boat is already half on its side; all on board sing out as loudly as possible to the men on shore to slacken the rope; and if they hear it in time, all may be well enough; but if not, the danger is very imminent that everything will be lost. . . .

Aug. 5 - For two or three days the wind was quite unfavourable; so that we were obliged to "lie to" without attempting to make any progress. On Sunday the wind increased to a violent gale, causing large waves on the river, which is deep and broad. We were unfortunately moored to the lee-shore, so that the wind both dashed the boats against the shore and the waves against the boats. It soon became evident that we should have difficulty to save the boats from being wrecked. In the other budgerow were a gentleman and his wife and their children. The lady, becoming alarmed, insisted on leaving the boat, and it was well they did so, for it sank under the fury of the waves in a few minutes after they had left it. A number of native vessels, and my freight boat, in which were some large boxes of things, shared the same fate. I had most of the valuable articles taken out of the budgerow, and with difficulty it was just saved; but as the rain was pouring down in torrents, and the wind was very high, the books were much injured, the other articles



damaged more or less, and, after three hours hard work in the rain, I got completely tired and wet. An English family happened to reside in the neighbourhood, who received us kindly and provided dry clothing.<sup>12</sup>

On the 9th of October, 1834, Mr. Lowrie landed at Cawnpore and travelled the remaining 500 miles to Ludhiana by *dak* palanquin, carried on men's shoulders by relays, day and night:

At night the *Dak* traveller presents a singular appearance. Foremost are the "bundle carriers," of whom I have three, each man walking along with a peculiar fast gait, and carrying two bundles of twenty-five pounds each, swung at the ends of a stick over his shoulder. Then comes the traveller in his palanquin, borne by four men, who at each step make a peculiar unpleasant sound, a kind of grunt, by way of music: while the four others run by their side, each set relieving the other about once in five minutes. But the most singular appendage is the mussalchi, or torch bearer, who runs along beside carrying a large torch on which he pours oil every few minutes, making a fine light. Every ten or twelve miles a fresh set of men are stationed.

Thus, after losing most of his goods in the river, John Lowrie arrived in Ludhiana (then spelled Lodiana) on Nov. 5, 1834, the first missionary to be sent out by the American Presbyterian Church.

#### THE PUNJAB AS A MISSION FIELD

The Punjab attracted both the American and the English missionaries.

Newton gives the reason for this as follows:

After much consideration they chose the Punjab. No other section of India is so full of historic interest as this. It was from here that Hindooism spread over the whole Peninsula. It was here that the great battle was fought which is described in the Mahabharat. It was through the Punjab that every successful invasion of India has taken place, except the British. It was here that the tide of Alexander's victories terminated.

But such considerations had little influence on the first Missionaries in the selection of their field of labour. This seems to have been due mainly to the fact that this was the land of the Sikhs - a people of fine physique, and unusually independent character; a people, moreover, who had already, in principle at least, discarded the old idolatry of Hindooism, and broken, in some measure, the bonds of caste; and therefore might be considered to be in a favourable state to be influenced by the preaching of Christian Missionaries.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Elijah P. Swift, Secretary of the American Missionary Society, thus addressed the Revs. James Wilson and John Newton, and Miss Julia Davis, who were among the first missionary appointees to the Punjab; it is in the somewhat imperialist fashion of that day Oct. 29, 1834.

It is also gratifying to know that Northern India, and especially the Seik (Sikh) Nation, the field, and the people to which you repair, present encouragements of the most inviting character. . . . The Seiks occupy a considerable part of the province of Lahore, in the northwesterly part of Hindostan, a territory 320 miles in length, and 220 in breadth; a part of Multan adjoining it on the southwest, and part of Delhi on the southeast. . . . The country of the Seik Nation, therefore, comprises the warm alluvial and fertile plains of the Punjab, and the high and salubrious elevations of the south base of the Himalayas, to which a mission intended for the Seiks might doubtless be removed if any important

advantage were likely to grow out of such an arrangement.

As a religious sect, this people took their rise in 1469, from Nanec Shah, who, after adopting the common method of pretended visions and miraculous endowments, and the practice of extraordinary austerities, travelled through the principal cities of India, preaching the peculiarities of this system and confirming his arguments by the power of his miracles. He appears to have been a man of genius and originality of character, and intent upon awakening a spirit of devotion among his countrymen. In process of time Gooroo Govind became the leader of the sect, and acquired greater fame and veneration than any of his predecessors. . . . This people are distinguished for their excesses in the use of ardent spirits, opium, and other intoxicating drugs; and some other vices are probably not less prevalent among them than the tribes of southern India. As soldiers they are active, cheerful and brave, and in their general character they are more open and sincere than the Mahratas; less fierce and cruel than the Afghans, and more indulgent to the female sex than any other people in India.

The Seiks, though under the government of several different Rajas, have in modern times recognized one superior leader in the person of Raja Ranjeet Singh, a chief whose warlike exploits are interwoven with the history of the wars of India. He is represented as a man of fine, prepossessing countenance, and a vigorous and richly endowed mind. During his whole life war has been his delight, and he is described as deceitful in politics, and implacable and terrible to his enemies. In private life he is said to be gentle and amiable; and at Lahore, his capital, he appears to great advantage, ruling with mildness and justice, patronizing genius, relieving penury and distress and selecting his ministers with great wisdom and discrimination. He is said by a French naturalist who spent some time in his court to be inquisitive in the extreme, proposing many curious and discriminating questions, and speaking with fluency one or two European languages, but also surrounded with the means of licentiousness in the most sumptuous profusion. We have adverted to the character of this chief because it is such as would be likely to favour the objects of your mission, and especially as he is said. . . . to be intent upon the physical and intellectual improvement of his subjects. [Quoted in the United Church Review of Nov. 1935, pp. 290,291.]

Regarding a Medical Mission at Amritsar, Sir Donald McLeod wrote the Anglican Mission Committee in 1872 as follows:

Next to Delhi, Amritsar is the most populous, the most convenient, and the most busy and prosperous city in the Punjab. It is at the same time the acknowledged chief centre of Sikhism, and thus the headquarters of what I believe to be the most interesting, most accessible, and least bigoted race in the Punjab, as well as the most vigorous and manly.<sup>14</sup>

The C.M.S. Mission History mentions such "Christian heroes in the Punjab" as Sir Henry Lawrence, Lord (John) Lawrence, Sir Robert Montgomery, Sir Donald McLeod, Sir Herbert Edwardes, Mr. Arthur Roberts, Mr. Edwards Thomson, Gen. Edward Lake, Gen. Reynell Taylor, and others. The History goes on to say:

Those were days in which governors and rulers lived not only for the punishment of evil-doers, but for *the praise of them who do well* days in which both the Bible and Prayer Book were believed in; when magistrates thought it not only their duty to execute justice, but were diligent also to maintain *truth* and were not ashamed to pray for grace to do it. They first in all their thoughts and words and works sought God's honour and glory; and then "studied to preserve the people committed to their charge in wealth, peace, and godliness." . . . . . They therefore became, many of them, the founders of our Punjab Missions.<sup>15</sup>

It was thus that many of the British officials of the Punjab regarded their work as a trust from God, a sort of civil lay mission. True devotion on the part of such men has been respected by the Sikhs, even when they may not have fully agreed with the beliefs and practices which induce it.

#### BEYOND THE SUTLEJ

In the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, no European, especially no Christian preacher was allowed in his territory, as we shall see from experiences in Phillaur and Kapurthala later. However, the Maharaja heard of Dr. Lowrie's school at Ludhiana, and invited Lowrie to visit him in Lahore. In 1835 he provided an escort of cavalry, and brought the young missionary to his capital with great honour. He wished him to start a school in Lahore for imparting an English education to young princes and nobles, spending six months of the year in Lahore. Mr. Lowrie wrote.<sup>16</sup>:

I should have been delighted to have accepted this proposal, if the state of my health would have at all justified my living on the plains; it presented a fine prospect of obtaining a standing and influence which would have been invaluable to a missionary. And in reflecting on the past, I have been disposed to regret that I had not consented at whatever risk; but the physician's advice was imperative.

Wherry evaluates the visit in these words:

Although unable to consent to the Rajah's project, the visit was not without important results. The missionary had made a good impression. The prejudice of the Sikhs against the Christian missionary were considerable modified, for during the long visit the missionary had many opportunities to tell the story of Jesus Christ and His salvation. The Rajah accepted the present of an English Bible and translation of the Old Testament in the Punjabi language and in the Gurmukhi character as published by the Serampore missionaries.<sup>17</sup>

To test the effectiveness of the Maharaja's "closed door" policy, and Indian Christian preacher named Goloknath was sent from Ludhiana to Phillaur. "This first apostle to the Sikhs stopped near the fort and began to preach the gospel. He was at once arrested and thrown on his back and a millstone placed on his chest." After some time the Sikhs decided to send him back to Ludhiana with a warning not to return.<sup>18</sup> Since 1817 Phillaur has been a mission station and Christian centre.

In the "Foreign Missionary Chronicle" for Dec. 1838 we read of a somewhat similar instance of hostility and misunderstanding of Christians in Kapurthala:

A few days ago one of them, named John Baptist, had occasion to go to Kapurthala, a city about 70 miles distant on the other side of river Sutlej. He took with him a supply of tracts to distribute. On Sabbath afternoon when he was in the bazar giving away tracts and talking to the people about the atonement of Christ, the Sikhs came upon him and threw him into prison, making his feet fast in the stocks. They reported his case to the mayor, who happened to be a Musalman. He immediately proceeded to the prison to see what was the matter. It seems he was a friend of John's father, and therefore endeavoured to vindicate him against the accusation of his enemies, he did not deem it best, however, to give him immediate release, either because he was afraid of the Sikhs, it being a Sikh

government, or perhaps because it might have increased John's danger. But afterward he sent his secretary, when the crowd had left the prison, with instructions to set the prisoner at liberty.<sup>19</sup>

In the Second Annual Report of the American Presbyterian Mission we read that some year later the Rev. John S. Woodside was invited to open a mission station and school at Kapurthala, with the expense mainly defrayed by the Raja:

Through the kind liberality of His Highness the Rajah, a substantial mission house has been built, and was occupied by Mr. Woodside in March last (1862). No sooner was it completed than the Rajah expressed a wish to proceed immediately with the erection of a church. For this purpose he placed at the disposal of the mission the sum of ten thousand Rupees (\$ 5,000) and the building is now in the erection process.<sup>20</sup> Christianity is everywhere outwardly respected; its claims upon the attention of the people are freely discussed and acknowledged by many as worthy of serious consideration. There is a wholesome spirit of inquiry abroad, but there is as yet but little evidence of a genuine *serious* concern on the subject of religion. The Spirit's power is still withheld and it becomes us to humble ourselves before God, and to seek earnestly for that Heavenly influence, without which the Mission effort must forever prove unavailing.<sup>21</sup>

In the Report of the following year, 1863, we read further:

He (the Rajah) himself invited the American missionaries to his capital, and presents to us the first instance in India in which the progress of the Gospel has been fostered by a ruler who makes no profession of faith in its doctrines. In Kapurthala the missionaries have more than toleration; they have open encouragement. On the Lord's day there are Hindustanee and English services. The latter is attended not only by all the European residents, but by the Rajah and his family, together with the Rajah's brother, Sardar Bikrama Singh.<sup>22</sup>

Wherry goes on to tell of the breach that occurred between the Rajah and Rev. Mr. Woodside, which resulted in the closing of the mission temporarily in 1865. This happened soon after the death of Raja Randhir Singh's beloved mother, who was a staunch friend of the missionary ladies. A few years later the heir apparent to the Kapurthala throne. Prince Harnam Singh, became a Christian and so forfeited his claim to the throne of Kapurthala. He held high offices both in the Church and in the State in British India. Several scholarships for Christians are still given in his name. "His family is an honour to him, all of his sons holding important offices in the civil and military service; one lies among the dead on the battlefield in France."<sup>23</sup> And, it should be added to bring things up to date, a daughter also has held high office, not only in India but in the World Health Organization of the United Nations, namely Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

## TWO MISSIONARY MARTYRS

Two American missionaries were put to death, by Sikhs, as it happened within a month of each other. On March 24, 1864, Rev. Levi Janvier was killed by a Sikh Faqir who had been arrested at the Anandpur Mela by a European police officer, and who killed Janvier out of vengeance, mistakenly supposing him to be that officer.<sup>24</sup>

The Rev. Isador Loewenthal, a converted Jew, was stationed in Peshawar waiting for a chance to carry out a mission to the Afghans. He had translated the New Testament into Pushtu, and commenced on the Pushtu Old Testament, translating from the original Hebrew.

As he was pacing his verandah at night he was shot by his watchman, a Mazhabi Sikh, who alleged that he thought Loewenthal was a thief. This happened on April 27, 1864.<sup>25</sup> Thus about a month apart the Church lost two much-needed linguists; for Rev. Levi Janvier was a Gurmukhi Punjabi scholar, and had helped to write the first Punjabi dictionary; and Rev. Isador Loewenthal was a scholar of Hebrew, Persian and Pushtu.

#### KUKAS AND SAT SANGIS

Both these sects had their headquarters near Ludhiana, and so the early missionaries became interested in them. Some first hand observations are interesting. Writing in 1867, the Rev. J.S. Woodside of Ludhiana Mission thus describes Ram Singh, their leader, who lived at Bhaini, near Ludhiana, and who also had a shop in the city near Mission Church which he frequently attended.

Ram Singh then is the disciple of Baluk Singh, who seems to have died some years back, 'having foretold the fall of the Sikh power before the *Khalsa* arms were finally repulsed, and the Punjab became a British province. But Baluk Singh's reputation was slight, and his name, all but unknown, has been eclipsed by the fame of his successor who has been steadily, though slowly, increasing the ranks of his followers, giving out that his vocation is to purify the Sikh religion, which he declares is no longer what it used to be in the time of Govind Singh. What the actual doctrines of this new religious leader may be, it is not of much importance to enter upon now, and it will suffice to mention that, as far as can be gathered from trustworthy reports, he objects to all idol worship, to eating meat and smoking tobacco, truth-telling being also a *sine qua non* to all who choose to adopt his creed. His followers may be known by a peculiarly shaped *puggree*, which is not allowed to come over the ears, and the wearing of a worsted necklace containing 108 beads.

Ram Singh is of a thin habit of body, about 50 years of age, and some 5 feet 10 inches in height, but a slight stoop makes him look shorter. His eyes are deep set and close up to the eye-brows, which are almost covered with the *puggree* that he wears low over the forehead. The nose is beaked, with small nostrils, and high cheek bones make his eyes look smaller than they are, while a thin wiry moustache and beard cover the lower part of the face, but do not conceal the contour of the jaw. In conclusion, it may be added that he is slightly marked with the small-pox, and has a furtive expression of countenance; but his manner is gentle and quiet, and he, to an ordinary observer, would be considered a politely behaved man. Such is the individual who has already got together a sect of over 100,000 men, and it is for the Government to determine whether it is safe for a man who wields such enormous power as does Ram Singh, to wander about the country, a sort of demi-god for the people to fall down and worship.<sup>26</sup>

After the Kuka disturbances in 1872, when some 56 Kukas had been blown away from guns by British officials who had feared a marauding attack on Patiala and Ambala, an Indian preacher on tour reported his reception by Kukas as follows:

While preaching in a village near Maler-Kotla, a numbardar of a Kuka village accompanied by several men came and listened attentively to the preaching. After the discourse was concluded he brought oxen and men to remove the tent, and that same night almost forcibly constrained the preacher to go with them to their village. Arriving there, they assembled the people to hear the Gospel preached, and during the discourse the numbardar broke his *mala* (rosary) and declared that he was no longer a Kuka, but determined to be a follower of Jesus and also urged the villagers to do the same. They

constrained the preacher to remain with them two days.<sup>27</sup>

The Sat-Sangis came to the notice of missionaries in Ludhiana in 1871 when the founder of this sect, Hakim Singh of Rampur (a village a few miles east of Ludhiana), sent to get copies of the Gurmukhi New Testament. The missionaries were invited to visit the village. The Rev. John Newton, M.D., and the Rev. E.M. Wherry of Ludhiana did this, and learned that Hakim Singh believed in the *Nishkalank Avatar* (Sinless Incarnation) foretold in Hindu books and the Tenth Granth<sup>28</sup>. He also believed in Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of those prophecies. Indeed, it seemed to Wherry that Hakim Singh's followers believed Sant Hakim Singh himself to be the *Nishkalank Avatar*! Newton and Wherry describe their visit to Rampur:

We were led through the narrow lanes of the village. . . . until we reached an adobe building, one storey high, a courtyard about twentyfive yards square. Entering through a strong wooden doorway, we passed through a long stable into the courtyard. On the right hand were the living rooms of the family. On the left was a commodious veranda with a platform two feet above the ground, where the Guru or Saint sat upon a bedstead. He was almost naked. A hooka or Indian pipe with a long stem stood nearby. In front of him men and a few women sat crowded together, reverently listening to the reading of the 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> chapters of the Gospel of St. Matthew. The reader was a boy about fifteen years of age, who read very fluently. Every few minutes the Guru would ejaculate wildly, "Yes, Yes! He is coming. Did you not see the stars falling last night? Hip, Hip, Sh-h-huh!" With this the Saint underwent strong contortions, causing his entrails to twist and move as if they were living creatures trying to escape! Then another ejaculation of "Hip-Hip-Sh-h-huh!"

The people prostrated themselves with murmurings. The reading went on until the chapters were ended. It was a strange sight. Closer observation showed us that the great majority of the devotees were Sikhs, many of them gray headed; a few were Hindus, one or two Brahmins and some men of low caste. There was evidently great enthusiasm among the hearers. The courtyard was jammed full.

It became clear to us that the Sant did not wish to cut loose entirely from the Indian community, although he uniformly treated the Christians with deference. He encouraged his followers to observe worship on the Lord's day. The manner of worship was a simple reading of the gospel, all sitting in a circle. Then after meditation all prostrated themselves with their hands extended, palms upward. This was to signify their expectation that they would receive the blessings they asked in prayer. The disciples usually made offerings to the Sant whenever they visited him.<sup>29</sup>

Imperfect as the faith of this group was, it had important results for the Christian movement in the Punjab. The New Testament and the name of Jesus Christ as the Sinless Savior was widely known in the villages of the Central Punjab; and from the school taught in Rampur for nineteen years by one of the followers of the Sant came two young Christian converts. Both of these were fed poison. One died, the other became the world famous Christian missionary and mystic, Sandhu Sundar Singh. His life and work will be briefly described later.

#### THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

A listing of the main church and mission stations seems necessary here in order to show the spread of Christianity over the Punjab. They are grouped under their founding missions.

The American Presbyterians were the first in the Punjab, with stations at Ludhiana, 1834; Saharanpur, 1835; Sabathu, 1836; Jullunder, 1846; Lahore, 1848; Ambala City, 1848; Ambala Cantt, 1850; Rawalpindi, 1856; Kapurthala, 1860, Hoshiarpur 1867; Ferozepore, 1869; Rupar, 1890; Khanna, 1894; Phillaur, 1897; Kasur, 1900 and Moga 1909.

The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England opened work at Simla and Kotgarh in 1840; Amritsar 1850; Peshawar 1853; Kangra 1854; Srinagar, Kashmir, 1864; Batala 1878; Tarn Taran 1885.

The American United Presbyterians commenced their work at Sialkot in 1855; Rawalpindi 1856; Gujranwala 1868; Gurdaspur 1872; Jhelum 1876; Pathankot 1880; Zafarwal 1884; Lyallpur 1895; Sangia Hill 1901; Sargodha 1905; Dhariwal 1920.

The Church of Scotland: Chamba 1863; Sialkot 1857 Daska 1857.

The New-Zealand Presbyterians: Jagadhri 1911. Kharar (English Baptists, 1891) taken over 1923.

The Methodist Church in Southern Asia commenced work in Lahore in 1881; Multan 1888; Patiala 1891; Delhi 1892; Raiwind 1922; Hissar 1928; they also have stations at Bhatinda, Fazilka, Gurgaon and Rohtak.

The Salvation Army (British) have work at Lahore, Dhariwal and Batala. The Roman Catholics have work at Lahore, Amritsar, Jullundur Cantt; Muktsar, Ferozepure, perhaps several other cities; but dates and statistics are not available at this writing.

The Uprising of 1857 devastated much of the Christian work in the United Provinces, but hardly disrupted the work in the Punjab. Actually, it resulted in a great expansion of Christian service under the stable conditions of British rule. The Ludhiana Mission reported no loss of life, but the church. School, press, and some dwellings were looted and set on fire. Wherry remarks, "It has been noted in all histories of this period how wonderfully loyal the Sikhs in the Punjab were, who only ten years before had fought so valiantly against the Government they now supported so bravely."<sup>30</sup> It is indeed marvellous that with the exception of Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Hunter and their child, who were Killed by mutineers at Sialkot on July 7, 1857, there was no loss of life reported among the missionaries or Indian Christians in the Punjab.

#### THE TREND FROM THE CITY TO THE VILLAGE

Missions generally commenced in the towns and cities. The strategy was usually to try to win the leaders, in the hope that they would bring along their followers. However, when the outcastes in the villages and bastis heard of a religion that accounted even the most lowly soul as supremely valuable and loved by God, these people crowded in and demanded the time and energy of the Christian leaders. Something similar happened in the case of the Sikhs, who could point to portions of the *Adi Granth* containing the hymns of low castes and outcastes, so that we may speak of mass movements both into Christianity and into Sikhism. Rev. Andrew Gordon, the pioneer missionary of the American United Presbyterians, puts his experience, which is typical of many others thus:

I began with my eye upon the large towns and cities, but have been led from them to the country villages. I began with the educated classes and people of good social position, but ended among the poor and lowly. The rich and educated ask, like Nicodemus (Gospel of

John, third chapter), “How can these things be?” - few of them ever advancing beyond this point; whilst the foolish weak, base, and despised ones accept the unspeakable gift as soon as it is offered, and press into the kingdom of God.<sup>31</sup>

The first Christian converts were settled in the sheltered mission compounds; but it soon became the policy to have them go back to their villages to live. This made for a stronger faith and a more courageous witness, besides being the normal thing to do; in any case, they soon came in too great numbers for anything else.

The village of Ghorawaha, near Hoshiarpur, is a good example, how Christian teaching and practices may develop without any apparent contact with Westerners. The Rev. Kali Charan Chatterji found as he was touring his district a Muhammadan faqir, Gamu Shah by name, who had eight disciples who claimed to be Christians. They had discarded the Quran and accepted the New Testament instead. They believed in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of men - a radical thing for Muhammadans. Gamu Shah had not even seen a copy of the Christian Scriptures, but apparently these beliefs had come to them by tradition from Gamu Shah's teacher. Several families among the Rajput Muslims were baptized. Severe persecution followed, much of it centering on the use of the village wells, but the converts remained steadfast. Today there is in Ghorawaha a Christian church building, and a congregation that has sent out teachers and preachers into the Church.<sup>32</sup>

#### DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANIZATION

Without organisation the Sikh Panth would probably have lapsed into a Hindu sect; without organisation the Christian Church would not have developed in India, or anywhere else. We can see four steps in the organizational development of Christianity in the Punjab: First, the various missions, European and American, which are really ‘extensions’ of the sending churches, commenced the work of founding the Christian Church; second, the Missions and their daughter Churches co-operated in the work of consolidation and development; third, the Mission are integrated into the Church, so that Missions as such no longer exist, but put their personnel and resources at the disposal of the Indigenous Church; then, finally, this integrated Church reaches out in further mission. For example, in illustration of the third step, the American Presbyterians no longer send missionaries to the Punjab, but Fraternal Workers, sent at the request of the Synod of the Punjab and under its control. The fourth stage is just coming into being in the Punjab, namely the sending forth of its own missionaries on the part of the integrated Church; but an Indian couple, the Rev. and Mrs. Din Dayal, have been sent to Kenya as missionaries of the United Church of Northern India. It is hoped to send out another couple soon. Other denominations of the Church in the Punjab are in various stages of these developments.

One thing we might note here in passing is the large number of Bengali names among the leaders of the Punjab Church-Chatterji, Mukerji, Bannerji, Dutt, Goloknath, and others. These are mainly descendents of Duffs converts in his College in Calcutta. We know that numbers of teachers for the schools and colleges in Lahore in the early days came from this source. Thus the Punjab Church seems to have been developed by Christians coming from North-eastern India, whereas we might have expected this from the older Christian Churches in the South. The greater similarity in the language and culture of the North as over against that of the South might well account for this.

Throughout the development of the Christian Church, laymen, that is, those who are not professional clergy, have had a large part in the initiating and building up of the Christian Church, both at home and abroad. We read, “It was in the year 1846 that an appeal was first



made to the Church Missionary Society by officers of our army and the civilians in India to urge them to send Missionaries to the Punjab, before the country was annexed to British India.”<sup>33</sup> They subscribed liberally to the support of missions, and it is reported that an officer of the East India Company’s army in Lahore made a gift of Rs. 10,000 for such missionary work.

The nascent Christianity of the Punjab produced leaders who— are the peers of Christian leaders anywhere in the world. Out-standing among these is Sadhu Sundar Singh, a product of Sikh ancestry and Punjabi environment, and a combination of East and West. He should probably be classed as a layman, because although he had some theological training, he returned his preacher’s license to the Anglican Church, and went on his preaching tours as a Christian Sadhu. No history of Christianity in the Punjab would be complete without at least a brief mention of this energetic mystic of world dimensions. Sundar Singh was born into a family of well-to-do Sikh farmers of the village of Rampur, now Ludhiana District, on September 3, 1889. Through his devout mother he inherited an interest in the things of the spirit; but while studying at the Mission Day School in his village, he developed an antipathy for Christianity, and even publicly burned a New Testament, in spite of the remonstrance of his father. However, his unrest increased until at last, on Dec. 16, 1904, he resolved to attain enlightenment or end his life under the early morning train that ran near his village. This experience is related by the Rev. T.E. Riddle, for many years his friend and confidant, and finally the executor of his will, in the following words:

In the cold of a winter’s morning, long before day, he bathed and began to pray. He looked for God to reveal Himself as Krishna, or Ram Chander, or as some other Hindu *avatar*, or incarnation. But while he was praying he became conscious that a light was shining in the room. This took the form of a globe of light and in the middle of it he saw the face of Jesus Christ. Convinced that God had answered his prayer, and that it was as Jesus that God had revealed Himself, he cast himself down on the ground and acknowledged Jesus as his Lord and worshipped Him. At once peace came to his troubled heart.<sup>34</sup>

He was baptized in Simla at the age of sixteen, and remained a member of the Anglican Church all his life. True to his mother’s early teaching, he became a Sadhu, but a Christian Sadhu, and for thirteen years he made preaching tours into Tibet, and sometimes into Nepal. He drew constant inspiration from heavenly visions:

A year after his first vision he had his first experience of the opened heaven, and of the seen glory of the spiritual world. While praying among the pine woods on the mountainside, heaven was opened before him, he saw its glory, and that of the beings there, and he experienced the ecstasy of divine illumination. He thought he must have died. At first he saw the beings there and heard only dim voices. Later on he had other and more frequent visions, in which he heard the beings speak, and in which he had long conversations with them; and always there was the ecstasy. Long after he told me that much of the material which he used in his addresses, and in his books, came to him during the conversations he had with angelic beings during his early times of vision.

He could not call up a vision. They came to him at irregular intervals, sometimes as often as ten or twelve in a month. They left no feeling of tiredness. As he was praying or meditating the heavens would be opened, and he would be filled with unutterable joy. Sometimes they came when he was sitting quietly in a chair; once when he was travelling in a railway carriage. He would all the time be dimly conscious of things going on round him, but he was in the heavenlies.<sup>35</sup>

He visited, besides Tibet, Christian churches all over India, and even went on a world tour visiting Christian churches in Burma, Singapore, Japan, China, England, America, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. He left for his last journey to Tibet in early summer of 1929. Apparently, being in poor health after his strenuous European tour, "he did not expect to return. That possibility did not trouble him at all. The glories of the spirit world he had seen in his visions were too real for him to hold back when the call to that fellowship should come."<sup>36</sup> The Rev. T. E. Riddle and Dr. Taylor followed the Sadhu's usual trail 220 miles into the Himalays to the borders of Tibet, but no trace of him was ever found. It is thought likely that he died of the cholera that was raging along that pilgrim route, and that his body, along with those of many other pilgrims, was thrown into the Ganges. Thus probably ended the earthly career of one of the great Christian saints of all time, thoroughly Christian and wholly Indian, the Punjabi Church's gift to world Christianity.

#### A VARIETY OF SERVICES

As one traces the development of Christianity, he cannot but be impressed by the variety of services to mankind offered in the Name of Christ: Village preaching and village welfare work; churches, open to all; medical services in cities and villages; orphanages; schools at all levels, academic and technical; colleges; hospitals and sanatoria; agricultural settlements; industrial settlements; leper homes; preparation of dictionaries and grammars in the vernaculars; Bible translation and preparation of religious literature; printing presses; adult literacy work and literature for it; Bible correspondence courses of study; audio-visual programmes and training; medical colleges; counselling famine and flood relief work, to mention some of them. Among outstanding Christian institutions, Pakistan has all the five large and well-established Christian Colleges; Forman Christian College, Lahore, Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore; Gordon College, Rawalpindi; Murray College, Sialkot; and Edwardes College, Peshawar. In Pakistan also there are large efficient Christian hospitals at Sialkot, Lahore, Taxila, Jalalpur Jattan and Montgomery. A Union Theological Seminary is at Gujranwala, also an Industrial School.

The East Punjab has only one Christian College, the new but fast developing Baring Union Christian College at Batala. The Brown Memorial Hospital and the Christian Medical College, serving all northern India, are at Ludhiana; there are good Christian hospitals at Dhariwal (Salvation Army); Ambala and Ferozepore (American Presbyterian); Tarn Taran and Kangra (Church Missionary Society); and Jagadhri (New Zealand Presbyterian). There are Leper Homes with medical services at Tam Taran and Ambala. Many of these hospitals have outstations for the villages. In the West Punjab there are agricultural settlements at Clarkabad and Stuntzabad; while in the East Punjab there is one at Santokh Majara, Kamal Distt. A new rural High School is developing at Sura Nussi near Jullundur, with both Boys' and Girls' branches. The pioneer teachers' training Institute at Moga is still busy turning out village school teachers. All classes and creeds share in the benefits of all this varied work. For example, the whole region of Kotgarh in the Simla hills owes its prosperity to the apple orchards pioneered many years ago by the Rev. Stokes of the Church Missionary Society.

There are so many Primary, Middle and High School serving all the children in their communities that it is beyond the scope of this article to even list them all. Also scores of villages can be found which boast of small Church buildings, usually characterized by crosses on the roofs, not to mention some of the fine churches to be seen in most of the large cities. One of the newest ventures in cooperation is the new Union Church at Chandigarh, developed under the auspices of the Punjab Christian Council which is formed by several co-operating churches. Thus Christianity in the Punjab has become indigenous, that is, rooted in the soil and nourished

by it The Christian population in 1961 is estimated to be Punjab, India, 315,000; Punjab; Pakistan, 409,000. About 16% are Roman Catholics, 84% Protestants.

Many a doctor in one of our modern hospitals could echo Dr. John Newton's account of his medical experiences at the Kapurthala Dispensary in 1863:

Having exhausted all the resources of all the *bakims* in the town, and found them to be unavailing, they consent, at length, to try the Dispensary. By this time, if the patient be not, indeed, "*in articulo mortis*," his disease, in the vast majority of cases, has at least become obstinately chronic. But, having received the medicines distributed at the Dispensary, he prudently reserves to himself the right to use them as he thinks best. Guided by his own judgement, or by the advice of a trusted *bakim*, he either changes the quantity, or else makes such alterations in the time and manner of taking the dose as Hippocrates himself might approve. Then if, unfortunately, a cure does not promptly follow, the failure is published abroad to deter others, not from like manipulation of the Doctor's directions, but from trusting themselves in any way to his treatment.<sup>37</sup>

Literary work has always been of first-rate importance, for the new Christian church needs literature of all kinds. Mention has been made of the Gurmukhi Punjabi Grammar prepared by the Rev. John Newton, and the Gurmukhi Punjabi Dictionary prepared by him in collaboration with the Rev. Levi Janvier in 1854. A Gurmukhi Punjabi Bible, though incomplete, was published in Calcutta by William Carey in 1889; a revised Gurmukhi New Testament was put out by Rev. John Newton in 1868. The first complete Bible in Gurmukhi Punjabi was published in 1959 by the Bible Society of India and Ceylon. It is interesting to note that this Bible was printed at Carey's Baptist Mission Press, now operating in Calcutta. The Punjabi Church's song book is mainly the metrical arrangement of the Book of Psalms by the Rev. Imam-ud-Din Shahbaz of Gurdaspur.

#### THE PARTITION OF INDIA

Brief mention must be made of Partition. Although the Christian communities were affected probably less than other groups, since the Christians stayed on in their towns and villages and simply exchanged masters, yet the character of the work and the administrative organization changed greatly. Most of the Churches, as well as their parent Missions, were forced to split into independent branches in Pakistan and India. Work for Muslims was intensified in Pakistan. Nearly all the Sikhs came over into the East Punjab and gave a great impetus to work for the Sikhs. In the Muslim work and the Mass Movement of the low castes, the Sikhs had become almost a forgotten people as far as the Christians were concerned. The Gurmukhi Bible of 1959 is a product of this concern, and a pledge of renewed interest in the people that in the early days attracted the first missionaries.

Co-operation between several Christian denominations (practically all the Protestants-the Roman Catholics have refused to co-operate) has for many years been carried out through the Northwest India Christian Council, of which co-operation the Union Church in Chandigarh is evidence. Actual Church Union both in India and in Pakistan was given impetus by partition. In Pakistan close cooperation is going on in various institutions, and Church Union seems not far away. In the East Punjab negotiations have for some years been going on between the United Church of Northern India (a union of Presbyterians of different nationalities, and Congregationalists), the Methodist Church of South-East Asia, and the Church of India (Anglican), looking toward organic union in one Church.

## CHRISTIAN MOTIVATION

Motivation is notoriously complex in any field; religious Motivation especially so. However, in view of the fact that from time to time charges of 'proselytising' have been made against Christians, by which is meant unworthy inducements to conversion in order to swell number, a few words about Christian motivation in offering the Gospel to all seem to be in order. Possibly in some quarters something akin to Napoleon's idea of the uses of missions may exist. Here is H.G. Wells on that subject:

Here is the Napoleonic view of the political uses of Christ "It is my wish to re-establish the institution for foreign missions, for the religious missionaries may be very useful to me in Asia, Africa and America, as I shall make them reconnoitre all the lands they visit. The sanctity of their dress will not only protect them but serve to conceal their political and commercial investigations. The head of the missionary establishment shall reside no longer at Rome, but in Paris."<sup>38</sup>

It is only fair to remark that such suspicions seem to come mainly from outside the Punjab; for that Province has long been the home of missionary faiths, such as Islam, Arya Samaj Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity, and they usually understand and respect one another.

At the end of the article on "Mission" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th Edition, p. 600, we read:

The ultimate argument for Christian missions lies now, as it has always lain, in the conviction laid upon Christians that they owe to their Saviour a gift so precious that they cannot keep it to themselves. The modern world may find a secondary motive in the fact that there is arising in all countries the outline of a common (and largely secular) civilization, and that it is abundantly clear that the ancient religions are largely irrelevant to it. At the same time all history goes to show that no society can survive without a religious and moral basis, and it appears likely that mankind will more and more be driven to choose between secularism and the religion of Jesus.

Another Christian writer says that the Christian motive is to give back to a part of Asia that light and life and truth which we ourselves have received from Asia. We remember that our Lord Jesus Himself was not a European, but an Asiatic, as was every Prophet of the Old Testament, and every Apostle of the New. We observe also that every great religion which still survives in the world, whether Christian, or Jewish, or Brahmin, Buddhist, or Mahomedan, was founded by Asiatic, and that each of them came into existence and grew to maturity in Asia. The Bible is altogether an Eastern Book. No great religion that now exists has been founded by a European, or in Europe. . . . We therefore seek to impart Christianity, and we do it in a Christian way. We do not force it on others, but we offer it to them, and entreat them in their own interest to take it."<sup>39</sup>

From the above quotations we can see that besides the motive of sharing the best we know, returning it, in fact, to its original home, there is a feeling on the part of many Westerners of an incompleteness in the Western grasp of Christianity, a lack that Eastern Christians, or even Easterners of other faiths, might help make up. The art of meditation, for instance, which Easterners have so long known and practised, is something the activist Westerner often wistfully desires to know more about, but it is so utterly foreign to his way of life and thinking that he must look elsewhere for it. Passive, or spiritual resistance, again, is emphasized in the teachings of Christ is known in theory to the West, but has been put in practice in India; now many groups

of American Negroes use it, successfully, too, in their struggle for social and civil rights.

Mankind is more and more becoming aware of the oneness and interdependence of the various races. Only a faith for the whole world, barring none, will do for the future. The Apostle John in his Gospel expresses this universal inclusiveness in the supreme example of God's love when he says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16).

#### Footnotes:

1. Formerly Vice-Principal, B.U.C.College, Batala, (Jan., 1961).
2. Latourette, A History of Christianity; Harpers, New York, 1953: pp. 80 and 930.
3. Amaury de Riencourt, The Soul of India; Harpers, New York, 1960: pp. 191, 192.
4. Archer, The Sikhs; Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 165.
5. *Ibid*, p. 70.
6. Hollister, The Centenary of the Methodist Church in South-east Asia; Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, India, 1956: pp. xxii ff.
7. Gordon, Our India Mission, Philadelphia, 1886: Ch. 1.
8. Clark, The Punjab and Sindh Missions, of the Church Missionary Society, Seeley Jackson & Halliday, London, 1885: p. 1.
9. Funk & Wagnalls, New York and London, 1904.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
11. The Foreign Missionary, Mission House, New York, 1871-72, Vol. xxx, p. 331.
12. Wherry, Our Missions in India, 1834-1924; Stratford, Boston, 1926: pp. 7-9.
13. Newton, History of A.P. Missions in India, Allahabad, 1886, p. 4.
14. Clark (above, 7): pp. 75, 76.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
16. Quoted by Wherry from Lowrie's "Two Years in Upper India", p. 144.
17. Wherry (above 10): pp. 16-17.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
19. The Foreign Missionary Chronicle, Robert Carter, New York, 1838: Vol. VI, p. 376.
20. This Church is still in existence. It is used as a Club by officials, but efforts are continuing to restore it to its use as a place of worship.
21. The Foreign Missionary (9), 1862-63, Vol. XXI, p. 7.
22. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, 1863-64, p. 155.
23. Wherry, pp. 167-69.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
26. Foreign Missionary. Vol. XXVI; 1867-68, p. 67.
27. Wherry, p. 237.
28. Dasam Granth Sahib Ji, 24 point Edition, Amritsar, 1934, p. 570.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-241.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
31. Gordon (6), p. 446.
32. Wherry, pp. 217-226.
33. Clark, p. 1.
34. Riddle, The Light of Other Days; Christchurch and Dunedin, N.Z., 1949; p. 175. Heiler, The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1927, pp. 42,43.
35. Riddle, pp. 177, 178.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

37. Foreign Missionary, Vol. XXI, 1863, p. 314.
38. Wells, Outline of History, Garden City, New York, 1951; p. 937.
39. Clark, pp. 355, 362.

## THE BRAHMO SAMAJ DEVINDER KUMAR VERMA<sup>1</sup>

The Brahmo Samaj was established in Bengal as a socio-religious movement by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, in the 4<sup>th</sup> decade of the nineteenth century and it soon spread in most of the important towns of the country. It was primarily an anti-idol-worship movement.

Ram Mohan Roy was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1772, in an orthodox Brahman family in the village of Redhanagar in Hugli district. His father Rama Kant was a rich man. This facilitated him in acquiring higher education. At the early age, he learnt Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, and started learning English. From the very beginning, he was deeply religious. At the age of fifteen, he thought of taking to *sannyas*. His father was a devout Hindu but he was vehemently opposed to it and this resulted in Ram Mohan's expulsion from his house. His privations and hardship did not deter him from his determination, and he clung strongly to his views and set out for the fulfilment of his objectives.

On his return home after two years stay in Tibet, his father gave him a warm welcome. But this could not keep him at home and he again started for Benaras.

Shortly thereafter, he joined service under the East India Company, and very soon rose to an eminent position. In the year 1802, he retired from service and started social and religious reforms in the country. He condemned the superstitions that were prevalent among the Hindus. At the same time he engaged himself in ancient Hindu religious studies and translated portions of the *Upanishads* into Bengali for the purpose.

When his elder brother passed away in the year 1811, his widowed sister-in-law decided to immolate herself as a *Sati* on the pyre of her deceased husband. Ram Mohan Roy tried to dissuade her from that course, but his efforts were not successful. On seeing this, he made up his mind to do everything possible to put an end to this evil practice. Under the pressing demand of Ram Mohan Roy the government was obliged to pass an Act in 1829, declaring *Sati* as unlawful. He also took up the cause of women education which was then deplorably neglected. He was also a staunch supporter of the freedom of press which he felt, was essential for social reforms.

He started a religious institution called *Aatmia Sabha* in Calcutta with the object of preaching "*Eko Brahman duitiya nasti*"—there is but One God and no other (god). He also started an English School where Devendra Nath Tagore, the second great reformer of the Brahmo Samaj, received his education.

Akbar II, the then Mughal Emperor, had certain grievances against the East India Company which he wished to present before the British Parliament. As the Mughal Emperor's representative Raja Ram Mohan Roy went to England on April 8, 1831, and he was able to persuade King William IV of England to listen to him with interest.

After two and half years of strenuous life in England, he died in Stapleton Grove on September 27, 1833. When his friend, Dwarka Nath Tagore visited England in 1838, he exhumed the dead body of Raja Ram Mohan Roy from Stapleton Grove and hurried it in the graveyard of *Arono's Vale* near Bristol and constructed *Samadhi* there.

Devendra Nath Tagore was the son of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's close friend Dwarka Nath Tagore. Devendra Nath Tagore got his early education in the English school started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and later he was admitted into the Hindu college. Though he was born in an orthodox Hindu family yet he had no interest in the Hindu rituals.

*Isopnishada's* introductory lines brought a revolutionary change in Devendra Nath's mind. He established the *Tat-Bodhini sabha* in the year 1839, which primarily aimed at discussing the *Upnishads*.

With clear impact on the masses, the Brahmo Samaj was entrenching itself in the society. In the year 1842, Devendra Nath Tagore joined the Brahmo Samaj and merged the *Tat Bodhini Sabha* in it. The Brahmo Samaj spread throughout Bengal with rapid strides and secured a large following in a short time.

On the death of his father, Dwarka Dass Tagore, in 1844, Devendra Nath performed the Brahmo Samaj rituals. But these did not find favour with most of his relatives and friends. But he remained firm in his conviction.

He did not like the people around him, because they were not prepared to co-operate with him in the eradication of superstitious rituals. He was fed up with the materialistic way of the world and left for Simla Hills in 1856 for *tapasya*. He was only twenty years old then. After two years, in 1858, he returned to Calcutta and started preaching Brahmo Samaj with greater vigour. Many well-educated religious minded Bengalis came into the fold of Samaj. As enthusiastic youngman, Keshav Chandra Sen, also joined it and gave a helping hand to Devendra Nath Tagore in the propagation of Brahmo ideas. He was appointed an *Acharya* of the Samaj in 1862.

Keshav Babu, went a step further than his preceptor. Devendra Nath had not broken with the Hindu ceremonies whereas Keshev Chandra was very critical of them. This resulted in the split in their ranks and Keshav Chandra formed a new party named *Bharat Varsi*-Devendra Nath's party began to be called the *Adi Brahmo Samaj*.

In 1905, Devendra Nath Tagore passed away at the ripe age of 89. His teaching, however, continue exercising their influence on the minds of the people.

Keshav Babu was born in Calcutta on November 19, 1838, in a well-to-do family of Hakims. He was a descendant of the Sen family of Bengal. Piare Mohan, his father, had died at an early age. Keshav was brought up by his grandfather, Babu Ram Kamal Sen, who was the Dewan of the Bank of Bengal. Keshav was chiefly influenced by his mother who was deeply religious. He believed in the efficacy of prayer and considered it to be an effective means of salvation.

He was hardly 19 years old when he joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857. When Devendra Nath returned to Calcutta from Simla Hills, in 1888 he was much impressed by the aptitude and interests of Keshav Chandra. Consequently, close relationship developed between them and it continued for a long time. Keshav Chandra joined the service of Bank of Bengal in Calcutta in 1859 but two years later he left it.

He founded in 1860 a society called the *Sangat Sabha* in which religious discussion were held. He also founded the Brahmo School, which helped advance the cause of the movement. In 1861,



he started a fortnightly English newspaper, named the *Indian mirror*, which was converted into a weekly in 1871. Later on it became a daily newspaper. This was the first Indian daily newspaper in English with an Indian editor.

*Acharya* Keshav Chandra Sen was a frank nationalist. In 1862, he said at the 32nd annual function of Brahmo Samaj: “Brahmo Samaj will unite East, West, North, South.” Similarly, in a prayer he said, “our prayer will not go in vain. Slowly and slowly the whole world will become one family. In the long run all shall unite in one family. There should not be two families in the domain of God.”

In 1863, Keshav Babu founded a *Brahmo Bandhu Society*, whose principle objectives were to unite all Brahmo Samajists, to publish small books for the use of women, to open Brahmo Schools, to arrange lectures, to open study centres and small dispensaries, and to publish literature relating to the Brahmo Samaj. In 1864, Keshav Babu toured southern and western parts of India and preached the ideas of the Brahmo Samaj everywhere. When he returned from this long journey, he established a Representative Society of the Samaj. *Maharishi* Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshav Chandra Sen were elected its President and Secretary respectively.

As has already been pointed out, Keshav Chandra Sen established a society on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1866, known as the *Vishal Society* or the *Bharati Brahmo Samaj* of which the Muslims and Englishmen were also allowed to become members. In 1866-67 Keshav Babu toured northern India and delivered lectures at Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar where small branches of the Samaj were also established. Besides Simla, many other places in the Panjab became the centres of Brahmo Samaj. But soon the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj movements also launched campaigns for social welfare and education in the Punjab. Therefore, the Brahmo Samaj could not have very deep roots in the Panjab.

With a view to spreading the Brahmo message outside India, Keshav Chandra Sen went to England in 1870 and stayed there for six months and preached in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow. After returning from England, he set up an Indian Reforms Association aiming at producing cheap literature to propagate women’s welfare, education, prohibition and charity. For this purpose, a weekly Bengali newspaper was started and a school for women was also opened by him in 1872. In the same year the Government passed a special marriage Act, so that the people who had come under the influence of the Brahmo movement might not suffer difficulties relating to marriage.

A new Brahmo Samaj was established by Keshav Chandra Sen on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1880. In the same year he went to Simla, where he learned himself towards God’s devotions. He had written a number of books including *Yoga* Objective and Subjective, and *New Sambita*. Hard work broke his health, and even the climate of the hills could not restore him to normal health. He returned to Calcutta in September and constructed a prayer temple, attached to his home, Lilly Cottage, which was inaugurated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1884. It was at this place that he made his last prayer. He passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1884, and his *Samadhi* was built in front of this temple.

Prayers offered to God was the basis of Keshav Chandra Sen’s life and religion. He said, “the first word of life’s religious book is prayer.” At another place he said that one who prayed for wealth, respect and material things, was deceiving himself. One should always keep his prayer sacred. One should only remember spiritual qualities and he would attain everything.

According to Keshav Chandra Sen, the Brahmo Samaj believed: God is One, He is Endless, Complete, Omnipotent, True, Supreme and Omnipresent. Soul is *Anadi* (Eternal). The law of God is truth. Good deeds result in good fruits and bad one's receive punishment. The gurus and *Granth*s of every religion should be respected. Religion is common to all and the whole world is one family. The glory of preaching of Brahmo Samaj in the Panjab rests upon Babu Partap Chander Majumdar. Babu Navin Chander, the president of the Lahore Brahmo Samaj, was a great scholar and a charming personality. It was here that Pandit Shiv Narain Agnihotri later on founded the Dev Samaj, and Surinder Nath Banerji became a source of inspiration for the religious and social reforms in the Panjab. Inspired by Bhagat Lakshman Singh, Pandit Hari Kishan, Pandit Madho Ram, Lala Khushi Ram, etc., met Babu Partap Chander in a deputation and requested him to visit Lahore. People of Lahore were highly impressed by the teachings of Partap Chander.

Bhagat Lakshman Singh mentions in his *Autobiography* about some of the Bengali Brahmo Samajists of Lahore. He remembers with respect Babu Parvati Chander Banerji, Kali Parsnno Roy, Joginder Chander Bose and Navin Chander Roy and he praises them for their selfless work. At the same time he feels sorry that Panjab's Brahmo Samajists were not so enthusiastic about social reforms as the Bengalis were. But for Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia's will of donating his property in charity to the Brahmo Samaj, the movement would have died in its infancy in the Panjab. Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia's gift to Brahmo Samaj was the daily English newspaper the *Tribune*, the Dayal Singh College, Lahore and the Dayal Singh Library, Lahore.

The well known old Brahmo Samajist in the Panjab is Shri Gurdial Malik, a close associate of Dr Ravindera Nath Tagore. He is an embodiment of the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj and has over the decades kept alive its spirit in the country.

(Adapted from the *Panjab* 1849-1960, pp. 141-49.)

Footnotes:

1. History Department, Punjabi University, Patiala.

	chapter	Book page, line	Doc page, line
poins	4 the sikhs' struggle	15,32	3,9
utte ossification	5 origins of the	21,9	1,8
unstinted	8 chief Khalsa	59,29	1,25
wrost	”	60,5	1,29
woved	B Khalsa college	83,6	3,32
loth	D the sikh kanya	100,2	1,28
othe	”	110,28	9,1
Hippocrates	L The History of Christianity	203,30	13,13

**THE ARYA SAMAJ<sup>1</sup>**  
**J.N. FARQUHAR**

1. This powerful body, which during the last twenty years has expanded rapidly in the Panjab and the United Provinces, is so completely the creation of its founder that a brief sketch of his life is the indispensable introduction to a study of the movement.

For the first thirty-three years of his life we have a very clear and informing witness, a fragment of an autobiography, dictated by him, and published in the *Theosophist*, in October and December, 1879, and November 1880<sup>2</sup>. This sketch seems to be on the whole trustworthy. It certainly enables us to trace in some degree the growth of his mind during the period which it covers.

In the small town of Tankara<sup>3</sup>, belonging to the native state of Morvi, Kathiawar, Western India, there lived early last century a wealthy Brahman named Amba Sankara. He had the position of Jamadar of the town, which his fathers had held before him, and was a banker besides. He was a devout Hindu, an ardent and faithful worshipper of Shiva. To this man was born, in 1824, a son, whom he named Mula Sankara. The father was above all things anxious that the boy should prove a religious man and should accept his father's religion. Accordingly he was careful to give him a Hindu education. By the time he was fourteen the boy had learnt by heart large pieces of the Vedas and had made some progress in Sanskrit grammar.

At this time the first crisis in his life occurred. As the incident is one of the most vivid episodes in the *Autobiography* [pp. 2-3], we give in his own words:

“When the great day of gloom and fasting, called Sivaratri, had arrived, this day falling on the 13<sup>th</sup> of *Vadya* of Magh, my father, regardless of the protest that my strength might fail, commanded me to fast, adding that I had to be initiated on that night into the sacred legend, and participate in that night's long vigil in the temple of Siva. Accordingly, I followed him along with other young men, who accompanied their parents. This vigil is divided into four parts, called *praharas*, consisting of three hours each. Having completed my task, namely, having sat up for the first two *praharas* till the hour of midnight, I remarked that the *Pujaris*, or temple servants, and some of the lay devotees, after having left the inner temple, had fallen asleep outside. Having been taught for years that by sleeping on that particular night, the worshipper lost all the good effect of his devotion. I tried to refrain from drowsiness by bathing my eyes now and then with cold water. But my father was less fortunate. Unable to resist fatigue, he was the first to fall asleep, leaving me to watch alone.”

“Thoughts upon thoughts crowded upon me, and one question arose after the other in my disturbed mind. Is it possible, -I asked myself, -that this semblance of man, the idol of a *personal* God that I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all religious accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps and drinks; who can hold a trident in his hand, beat upon his *damaru* drum, and pronounce curses upon men, - is it possible that he can be the Mahadeva, the Great Diety, the same that is invoked as the Lord of Kailash, the Supreme Being and the Divine hero of all the stories we read of him in his Puranas? Unable to resist such thoughts any longer, I awoke my father, abruptly asking him to enlighten me, to tell me whether this hideous emblem of Siva in the temple was identical with the Mahadeva, of the scriptures, or something else. “Why do you ask it?” said my father. “Because,” I answered, “I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent, living God, with this idol, which allows the mice to run upon its body, and thus suffers its image to be polluted without the slightest protest.” Then my father

tried to explain to me that this stone representation of the Mahadeva of Kailash, having been consecrated with the Veda *mantras* (verses) in the most solemn way by the holy Brahmins, became, in consequence, *the* God himself, and is worshipped as such, adding that, as Siva cannot be perceived personally in this Kali-Yuga -the age of mental darkness, -we hence have the idol in which the Mahadeva of Kailash is worshipped by his votaries; this kind of worship is pleasing to the great Deity as much as if, instead of the emblem, he were there himself. But the explanation fell short of satisfying me. I could not young as I was, help suspecting misinterpretation and sophistry in all this. Feeling faint with hunger and fatigue, I begged to be allowed to go home. My father consented to it, and sent me away with a Sepoy, only reiterating once more his command that I should not eat. But when, once home, I had told my mother of my hunger, she fed me with sweetmeats, and I fell into a profound sleep.”

Every one will feel the beat of conviction in this fine passage; and the results of it are visible in the crusade of the Arya Samaj against idolatry to this day. But every one who knows India will also agree that what happened is scarcely comprehensible in a Hindu boy of fourteen years of age, unless he had already heard idolatry condemned. Brooding over the problem, I wrote to my friend, Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson of Rajkot, Kathiawar, and asked whether *Sthānakavāsī* influence could be traced in or about the boy’s birthplace at that time. The Sthānakavāsīs are a group of Jains who gave up idolatry and broke away from the main Svetāmbara sect in the fifteenth century. Mrs. Stevenson writes:

“Tankara is fourteen miles south of Morvi, and about twenty-three miles north of Rajkot. In the thirties, the father of the present Thakur Saheb of Morvi was ruling. He was very devoted to a certain Sthānakavāsī monk, and the Prime Minister also was a Sthānakavāsī; so that the Sect was then very powerful and influential in the Morvi state. All monks and nuns, travelling from the town of Rajkot (another Sthānakavāsī stronghold), passed through Tankara, where Amba Sankara and his son lived.”

This clearly gives the environment which prepared the boy for his experience in the temple.

Four years later the sudden death of a sister convulsed him with grief, and made him realize to the full the horror of death. He thereupon resolved that he would allow nothing to restrain him from winning *moksha*, that is emancipation from transmigration, the Hindu idea of salvation. Consequently, he returned to his studies with redoubled energy, and made up his mind to allow no such entanglement as marriage to impede him in his quest. In 1846, when he was twenty-one or twenty-two, his parents determined to get him married; but he fled from home. Thus ends the first section of his life.

2. In his wandering he met a number of ascetics, who received him into their order. His father came out to seek for him and caught him, but he escaped once more. He then met with a *sannyasi* named Brahmanand, and by him was convinced of the truth of Vedānta doctrine of his identity of his own soul and God. This he gave up at a later date. For two years he wandered about, seeking good teachers.

In 1848 he proceeded to Chanoda Kanyali on the banks of the river Nerbudda, and met several groups of scholarly ascetics, some of them followers of the Yoga system, others of the Vedānta. He was most anxious to become an initiated *sannyasi*, that is, a Hindu monk who has renounced the world completely. He gives up caste, home, marriage, property, the use of money and of fire, and is expected to live a wandering life. If he were once received into one of the recognized orders of sannyasis, his parents could no longer bring pressure upon him to marry.

At length he begged an ascetic known as Paramananda, belonging to the Sarasvati order of Sankara's Dandis, to receive him. At first he refused, but, after much persuasion, he initiated him, giving him the name of Dayananda. Since he had thereby become a member of the Sarasvati order, he was henceforward known as Dayananda Sarasvati. Until the day of his death he would tell no one his real name.

From this time onwards for eight years he wandered about from place to place, trying to find trustworthy teachers of Yoga. His *Autobiography* does not tell us why he was so eager to learn Yoga methods; but he probably regarded them as the proper means for reaching the emancipation which he was so desirous to reach.

Either at the time of his initiation as a *sannyasi*, or at some point during these years, he lost faith in the teaching of Sankara, and came to believe that God is personal, that the human soul is distinct from God, and that the world is real. He does not tell us who the teachers were who led him to these opinions. They are probably the outcome of the modern influences he came under, and of his original belief in Siva. In any case he continued to worship Siva, and believed in the personality of God.

His books on Yoga contained anatomical accounts of the human body. Reading in these volumes long and intricate descriptions of nerve-circles and nerve-centres which he could not understand, he was suddenly filled with suspicion. As it happened, a dead body was floating down the river on the banks of which he was walking. He drew the corpse to the shore, cut it open, satisfied himself that the books were false, and in consequence consigned them to the river along with the corpse. From this time his faith in many works on Yoga gradually dwindled.

The *Autobiography* stops short at the beginning of 1857, and we are without information of his activities until 1860. Thus there is no echo of the Indian Mutiny whatsoever in his life.

He had been greatly disappointed in his search for competent teachers.<sup>4</sup> In 1860, however, he came across a blind Brahman in the city of Mathura (Muttra), and became his disciple for two and a half years. His master, whose name was Virajananda, was a great authority, on Panini's Grammar. He believed implicitly in the authority of the ancient books but condemned all modern Sanskrit religious works as worthless lies. He would not accept Dayananda as a disciple until the latter had sunk all his modern books in the river Jumna. Blind and learned though he was, he was a very irritable man, and would now and then give his disciple corporal chastisement. One day he struck him on the hand with a stick with such violence that he carried the mark of it all his life. This man influenced Dayananda more than any other. He read with him Panini's Grammar and Patanjali's Commentary on it. We are also told that he studied the *Vedanta-siltras* and many other books but what these other books were, we do not know. Whether it was from Virajananda that he learned the extraordinary method of expounding the Vedas which he used in writing his Commentaries in later years, we do not know. But his teacher certainly sketched his mission for him. When he was leaving, Virajananda said to him:

"The Vedas have long ceased to be taught in Bharatvarsha, go and teach them, teach the true Shastras, and dispel by their light, the darkness which the false creeds have given birth to. Remember that, while works by common men are utterly misleading as to the nature and attributes of the one true God, and slander the great Rishis and Munis, those by the ancient teachers are free from such a blemish. This is the test which will enable you to differentiate the true, ancient teaching from the writings of ordinary men." (Chhajju Singh, 77)

It was in May 1863, that he took leave of his master and began his wanderings once more. He now regarded himself as a learned man, and usually conversed in Sanskrit rather than in the vernacular Hindi. Although he had many a conversation and discussion during those years, he still thought of himself as a religious student and not as a teacher. When he started out, he was still a devotee of Siva, wearing the necklace of *rudrākṣa* berries, and the three lines of white ash on the forehead, which distinguish the pious Saiva. But in the course of his wanderings his mind altered, and he laid these things aside once for all. Hence forward he worshipped God, and recognized Siva as only one of the many names of the Supreme. This change seems to have come in the year 1866, which was clearly a time of crisis for him. During that year he came in contact with various missionaries and had long conversations with them. The same year finds him not only preaching against idolatry at Hardwar, but telling the pilgrims there that sacred spots and ceremonial bathing are of no religious value whatsoever, and denouncing the great Vaishnava book, the *Bhagāvata Parāna*, as immoral.

3. A further change came in the year 1868. Virajananda and he seem both to have felt that it was now his duty to begin the public exposition of his ideas. From this time, then, Dayananda's public life may be said to have begun. His biographer speaks of him as trying several methods of work, and finding them each more or less a failure.

His first plan was to talk to the pandits in Sanskrit, in the hope that, if he convinced them of the truth of his ideas, they would spread the light all over the land. But these old-fashioned conservatives, no matter how often convicted of error, were of the same opinion still. So he gave the course up in despair.

He next decided to adopt one of the methods which he had seen in use in Christian missions, namely education. He found some well-to-do men to finance several schools for him. The curriculum was to be confined to early Sanskrit literature. He hoped that pupils trained in this way would become missionaries of his ideas. The schools were opened, and continued for some time; but though the pandits were quite willing to receive his pay and become school masters, they did not teach the new ideas; and the work came to nothing.

Consequently, he determined to appeal to the people themselves, both by lectures and by books. He published a number of books, and went from town to town, delivering lectures, in Sanskrit, on the right interpretation of the Vedas and the teaching which he believed they gave. This method was more successful. He found it quite possible to draw huge audiences wherever he went, and to get the ear, not only of ordinary men, but of the wealthy. He had many conversations with individuals, but consistently refused to speak to women. Wherever it was possible, he met the pandits in discussion. He was specially anxious to prove in every place, in public discussion with the most learned men, that idolatry has not the sanction of the Vedas. His followers declare he was always victorious in these discussions. All those who met him in discussion declared him to be violent, loud tongued and overbearing. He still lived like a *sannyāsi*, wearing only a minimum of clothing. He was a large, powerful man with striking features, and rather a remarkable voice.

In the end of 1872, he went down to Calcutta, and spent four months there, lecturing, speaking and discussing. He had been above all things anxious to meet Keshab Chandra Sen; and it is clear that Keshab and the Samaj exercised a very wonderful influence over him. Two changes in his method date from this time. He began to wear regular clothes; and a picture which still survives shows that he must have copied the Brahmo leaders, whose dress was a modification of missionary costume. Secondly, he realized, from the great influence exercised by

Keshab and the other Brahmo leaders though their addresses in Bengali, that he ought to give up using Sanskrit in his public lectures and speak in Hindi instead.

4. His fame and influence continued to spread and become deeper, as he taught far and wide throughout North India. At Allahabad in 1874 he completed his *Satyārth Prakāśh* with which we shall have to deal later. In the end of 1874 we find him in Bombay, in close touch both with the Hindu community and the young Prarthana Samaj. He seems to have had more than usual success in the city; for he returned early in 1875, and there launched his great scheme, the foundation of the Arya Samaj. The members of the Prarthana Samaj had hoped to be able to unite with him, but the differences were too deep. It is clear, however, that the main features of his society were borrowed directly from the Brahmo and Prarthana Samajies, as he saw them working in Calcutta, Bombay and elsewhere. The common names covers common features. This may be taken as the end of the third, and the beginning of the last stage of his life.

On the first of January, 1877, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in a magnificent Durbar held by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton at Delhi. Dayananda was present as the guest of one of the native princes, and met some Hindus from Lahore, who gave him a pressing invitation to visit the Panjab. Shortly after he visited Ludhiana and Lahore. So great was his success in this latter city, that the Arya Samaj founded there very speedily eclipsed the society founded in Bombay; and Lahore became the headquarters of the movement.

For six years longer Dayananda lived and worked, touring throughout North India, and steadily extending the Samaj. There are just two matters to be noted during these years. The first is his connection with the Theosophical Society which had been founded in New York in 1875. In 1878 the founders, Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, wrote to Dayananda and suggested a union of the two movements, on the ground that their aim was the same; and Dayananda accepted the proposal. The Theosophist leader came to India in January, 1879, and the strange union continued until 1881, when it was broken off both parties feeling bitter and aggrieved.<sup>5</sup>

The other matter is a living part of his general policy. He consistently sought to recall the Hindus to what he conceived to be the ancient faith, and as consistently stirred them up to vehement opposition to Christianity and Muhammadanism. In the first edition of the *Satyārth Prakāśh*<sup>6</sup> published in 1874, he approved of beef-eating under certain conditions, but in the second edition it is condemned. In 1882 he formed the *Gaurakshini Sabhā*<sup>7</sup> or Cow-protecting Association and about the same time published his book, *Gokarunanidhi*,<sup>8</sup> on the same subject. The purpose was to rouse Hindu feeling against Christians and Muhammadans on account of the killing of cows and oxen, and to present a monster petition to Government,<sup>9</sup> begging that the practice might be prohibited. Dayananda died before the movement had spread very far; but later it attained great proportions, as we shall see.<sup>10</sup> In this connection Sir Valentine Chirol has suggested<sup>11</sup> that Dayananda was a political schemer. This we believe to be a complete mistake, although as we shall show, his unhealthy teaching has produced very unhealthy political fruit.<sup>12</sup>

He passed away on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, 1883, at the age of fifty-nine.

5. The following sketch of his position and aims by Dr. Griswold of Lahore is so vivid and convincing that we cannot do better than transcribe it:

“Pandit Dayananda Sarasvati became finally emancipated from the authority of Brahmanism in some such way as Luther became emancipated from the authority of the Church of Rome. Luther appealed from the Roman Church and the authority of tradition to the



Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Pandit Dayananda Sarasvati appealed from the Brahmanical Church and the authority of *Smriti* to the earliest and most Sacred of Indian Scriptures. The watchword of Luther was 'Back to the Bible': the watchword of Pandit Dayanand was '*Back to the Vedas*', with this religious watchword another watchword was implicitly, if not explicitly combined, namely '*India for the Indians*.' Combining these two, we have the principle, both religious, and political, that *the religions of India as well as the Sovereignty of India ought to belong to the Indian people*; in other words, Indian *religion* for the Indians, and Indian *Sovereignty* for the Indians. In order to accomplish the first end, Indian religion was to be reformed and purified by a return to the Vedas, and foreign religions as Islam and Christianity were to be extirpated. Thus the programme included *reform* for indigenous religion and *extirpation* for foreign religion. With regard to the second end, the founder of the Arya Samaj seems to have taught that a return to the pure teachings of the Vedas would gradually fit the people of India for self-rule and that independence would ultimately come to them. I am not charging Pandit Dayanand Sarasvati with disloyalty. Every sincere well-wisher of India hopes that the time will come when the Indian people through the spread of education and the removal of bad social customs and, above all, through the prevalence of true religion will *befitted* for self-government. It is evident from all this that Pandit Dayanand Sarasvati was a man of large views. He was a dreamer of splendid dreams. He had a vision of India purged of her superstitions, filled with the fruits of Science, worshipping one God, fitted for selfrule, having a place in the sisterhood of nations, and restored to her ancient glory. All this was to be accomplished by throwing overboard the accumulated superstitions of the centuries, and returning to the pure and inspired teachings of the Vedas. Thus the founder of the Arya Samaj was a kind of Indian Elijah or John the Baptist, who felt himself called to turn the hearts of the degenerate children of modern India to their fathers of the glorious Vedic age, to reconcile the present with the past. The character of his mission helps to account for the violence of his methods of controversy. Elijah was not specially gentle in his dealings with the prophets of Baal; nor was Luther very tender toward the Roman Church. In like manner Pandit Dayanand Sarasvati stood with his back to the wall, facing on the one hand the attacks of the Brahmanical hierarchy and on the other the assaults of the foreign religions, Islam and Christianity. Under these circumstances we can hardly wonder that he struck back as hard as he could. Luther dealt heavy blows at the Roman Church as Pandit Dayanand Sarasvati did at the Brahmanical Church. Suppose now that while Luther was fighting with Rome, an extensive and powerful Mohammedan propaganda, which threatened to devour all the fruits of the Reformation, was found all over Europe. What would Luther have done under these circumstances but smite the apostate Roman Church at home and the Mohammedan propaganda from abroad with impartial zeal and violence and with no great effort to be fair and appreciative. This illustrates exactly Pandit Dayanand's attitude toward the degenerate Brahmanical Church, on the one hand, and the foreign faiths Christianity and Islam on the other. In his opinion, the one needed to be purged and pruned; the others, to be extirpated. The sections in the *Satyarth Prakdsh* which deal with the criticism of Islam and Christianity are evidently intended to be the literature of such extirpation, *i.e.*, to be the means of rooting out all such foreign superstitions from the hearts of the sons of India. For extreme unfairness, for inability to state the position of opponents without caricature, and for general crudeness, these sections can hardly be matched in the whole literature of religious controversy.<sup>13</sup>

6. Dayananda's chief convictions may be summed up as follows:

(a) There is one God only. He alone is to be worshipped; and he must be worshipped spiritually, not by images.

(b) The four Vedas are God's knowledge. They contain all religious truth, and also all science, at least in germ. They are the eternal utterance of God. There is nothing temporary or

local in them. Everything which seems a reference to particular times and places only seems such through misconception. There is no polytheism in the Vedas. The many divine names which occur in them are all epithets of the one true God. These statements apply only to the collections of hymns. The Brahmanas have less authority. Many other Hindu books are of value, because they were written by rishis and other inspired men, but they are not authoritative in the same sense as the Vedas; and they are not to be followed where they contradict the Vedas.

(c) The Vedas teach transmigration and *karma*.

(d) Forgiveness is for ever impossible.

(e) Salvation is emancipation from transmigration.

The following are Dayananda's chief works:

(i) *Satyarth Prakash*, a Hindi work, setting forth his teaching on marriages, the bearing of children, education, the ascetic orders, government. God, the Vedas, the world, man, salvation and food, and a long and interesting description of the various creeds of India with Dayananda's criticism of them.

(ii) *Veda Bhashya*, a Vedic Commentary In Sanskrit. It is incomplete, yet covers the whole of the *Yajurveda* and the major part of the *Rigveda*.

(iii) *Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika*, an Introduction to his Vedic Commentary, partly in Sanskrit, partly in Hindi, a controversial work in which he condemns all existing commentaries as false, and expounds his own principles.

7. The most amazing of Dayananda's ideas is his conception of the Vedas. In order to understand how he came to hold it, we must recognize what the traditional Hindu doctrine about them is. Since the Veda is the eternal utterance of God, there can be no temporal references in it. As Max Muller says:

If any historical or geographical names occur in the Vedas, they are all explained away, because, if taken in their natural sense, they would impart to the Vedas an historical or temporal taint.<sup>14</sup>

This violent method of exegesis, whereby hundreds of allusions to places and events in these most human documents are distorted and misexplained, already finds clear expression as the only right principle of Vedic interpretation in the earliest treatises on the subject that have come down to us, some of which come from dates five or six centuries before Christ.

Dayananda held fast by the old dogma, that the Vedas are God's eternal utterance. Several other Hindu ideas, notably the doctrines of transmigration and *karma* and of the sanctity of the cow, remained firmly seated in his mind.

But in his long, stormy career of wandering and disputing with all sorts and conditions of men, the facts of life, as they stared him in the face in North India under the British Government, had driven certain very modern and un-Hindu ideas into his mind with great force. The most important of these was the group of related convictions, that there is but one God, that all the gods (*devas*) of the Hindu pantheon have no existence, that idolatry is irrational and degrading, and that the sacrifice of animals and the offering of food as practised in Hindu

temples are silly superstitions. Next in importance was his perception of the practical value of Western science and invention as made plain in the railway, the telegraph and modern weapons of war. Amongst his other fresh convictions may be mentioned the folly and danger of caste as practised in modern times, and of child-marriage.

Now these two groups of ideas, Hindu and modern, seem to have been both firmly implanted in his mind. He had no modern education. He did not know sufficient English to read English books so that he had no grasp of modern methods of thought and criticism. Nor had he had a thorough Hindu training. He had read with his blind teacher the best that Hindu literature contained on grammar and philosophy, but he had had no complete Vedic education. The time he spent with Virajanand was insufficient for the purpose. Hence, believing the Veda to be God's knowledge, he necessarily concluded that it corresponded with his own convictions as to truth, i.e., that it taught monotheism, transmigration and modern science, and that it did not recognize the gods of Hinduism, nor sacrifice and, being a Hindu born and bred, and filled with Hindu methods of thought, he proceeded, like the earliest Hindu scholars, by violent methods of interpretation to expel from the Vedas what he held to be false and to import into them what he held to be true. Max Muller writes:

“To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that— everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas.”<sup>15</sup>

Naturally he took full advantage of the principle stated by the ancient scholars, which we have just referred to, as justification of his methods.

Yet, though he claims to have restored the ancient interpretation, in reality he departs from it in two large and most important matters. The ancient scholars recognize the gods, in the Vedas and all the details of their worship, while he removes all the gods, and leaves only the one. To the ancient teachers, the *Brahmanas*, with their appendices, the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, are as truly the eternal word of God as the Hymns are; but Dayananda makes the claim only for the *Sambhitas*, i.e., the collections of Hymns, and recognizes the presence of a human element in the *Brahmanas*. He thus stands absolutely alone as an interpreter of the Veda. No Hindu, ancient or modern, ever taught what he teaches; and we need scarcely say that every Western scholar repudiates both his methods and his results.

It is thus quite possible to follow the process of thought by which the Swami reached his doctrines. Yet, when one turns to the hymns themselves and to his interpretation of them, it becomes exceedingly difficult to believe in his straight-forwardness and sincerity. One can hardly imagine any mind believing what he says. In order to give the ordinary reader some indication of his methods, we here transcribe the first five stanzas of the first hymn of the *Rigveda*, as translated by Hopkins.<sup>16</sup> It is a hymn of praise to the god *Agni*, i.e., Fire regarded as the great priest, because sacrifices were wafted to the gods on the flames and smoke of the altar-fire.

TO AGNI

I worship Agni; house-priest, he,  
And priest *divine of* sacrifice,  
Th' oblation priest, who giveth wealth.  
Agni, by seers of old adored,

To be adored by those to day-  
 May he the *gods* bring here to us.  
 Through Agni can one wealth acquire,  
 Prosperity from day to day,  
 And fame of heroes excellent.  
 O, Agni! whatsoe'er the rite  
 That thou surround'st on every side,  
 That sacrifice attains the *gods*.  
 May Agni, who oblation gives-  
 The wisest, true, most famous priest-  
 This *god* with (all) the *gods* approach!

The meaning expressed in the above translation is precisely what is given by all Hindu scholars, ancient and modern; and all Western scholars agree. There are five words in the translation printed in italics. In the original the word in each case is *deva*, god, either in the singular or the plural. In the first stanza it is translated as an adjective, elsewhere as a substantive.

Dayananda, like certain early Christian exegetes, is an advocate of the method of dual interpretation. Agni is not a god, but is at once a name of the one God, and the name of the material element, fire. Taken as a name of God, it means, "giver and illuminator of all things." Taken as the material element, it means "fire which gives victory in battle by means of skilfully contrived weapons." This last is an allusion to modern firearms. In the first stanza he takes the word *deva* as an epithet of the one God and as meaning "Giver." In the second he translates it "excellent sense-organs" or "excellent pleasures." Of the fourth and fifth stanzas he gives two translations; the one taking Agni as "God," the other taking it as "fire". In the fourth stanza, if God is addressed, *devah* means "learned men"; if God is addressed, *devah* means "excellent thing." In the fifth stanza, if we take Agni to mean God, the last line runs, "May this selfluminous One approach with learned men": if we take Agni to mean fire the meaning is, "May this illuminator approach with excellent qualities." This need no comment. As translated by Hindu and by Western scholars, the poem is a polytheistic hymn, but clear, comprehensible, human. Dayananda's translation reduces the lines to nonsense.

It ought to be stated here that Pandit S.N. Agnihotri,<sup>17</sup> the founder of the Deva Samaj published in 1891, a pamphlet called *Pandit Dayananda Unveiled*, in which he avers that a number of men, some belonging to Gujarat, others to Bengal, others to the Panjab, declared to him, either in conversation or by letter, that Dayananda, in personal conversation with them, had acknowledged that his statements about the Veda were not matters of conviction but of diplomacy, that a religion must have some superstition as its basis, and that he had chosen the infallibility of the Vedas, because nothing else would be accepted by Hindus. Dayananda had been dead eight years when the pamphlet appeared; and one of his followers attempted to demolish the writer by means of another pamphlet.<sup>18</sup> As the evidence was not carefully shifted by an impartial scholar at the time, it is not possible to say precisely how much weight ought to be attached to it; yet two or three of Agnihotri's witnesses were religious men of known probity, so that it would be hard to set their testimony aside. I have also received myself, from an altogether different source, another piece of evidence which strikingly corroborates their statements. The Rev. P.M. Zenker of the Church Missionary Society, Muttra, writes of an incident which occurred when he was in Brindaban preaching at a spring festival. He cannot vouch for the year, but it was 1884, 1885 or 1886. One of the leaders of the local Arya Samaj had a long and serious conversation with him in the afternoon. Mr. Zenker returned his call the

same evening; when they had another long talk. I quote Mr. Zenker's report of the conversation, so far as it refers to the Arya Samaj:

"My informant stated that Dayanand's real object was to obtain for India all the advantages which Western civilization has conferred on the nations of Europe and America. But, being fully acquainted with the character of his Hindu fellow-countrymen, he knew they would hardly accept as a guide one who presented *this* as the sole aim and object of all the laborious training they would have to undergo. He, therefore, cast about for an expedient to gild the pill; and he thought he had found it in the cry, "Let us return to the pure teaching of the Veda." This conversation, which occurred only some two or three years after Dayananda's death in 1883, corroborates the statements of Agnihotri's witnesses, who had personal intercourse with the leader himself. The evidence is not absolutely conclusive; but, taken along with amazing character of Dayananda's commentaries on the Vedas, it will have considerable weight with the open-minded student.<sup>19</sup>

8. The following is the official creed of the Samaj:

(i) God is primary cause of all true knowledge, and of everything known by its name.

(ii) God is All-Truth, All-Knowledge, All-Beatitude, Incorporeal, Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unbegotten, Infinite, Unchangeable, without a beginning, Incomparable, the Support and the Lord of All, All-pervading, Omniscient, Imperishable, Immortal, Exempt from fear. Eternal, Holy, and the Cause of the Universe. *To Him alone worship is due.*

(iii) The Vedas are the books of true knowledge, and it is the paramount duty of every Arya to read or hear them, read to teach and preach them to others.

(iv) One should always be ready to accept truth and renounce untruth.

(v) All actions ought to be done conformable to virtue, i.e., after a thorough consideration of right or wrong.

(vi) The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, spiritual and social condition of mankind.

(vii) All ought to be treated with love, justice, and due regard to their merits.

(viii) Ignorance ought to be dispelled and knowledge diffused.

(ix) No one ought to be contented with his own good alone but every one ought to regard his prosperity as included in that of others.

(x) In matters which affect the general social well being of the whole society, one ought to discard all differences and not allow one's individuality to interfere, but in strictly personal matters every one may act with freedom.

But these sentences omit many of the points which it is most important to know.

9. The following are the leading theological ideas of the Samaj:

Orthodox Hindus allow only men of three highest castes to study the Vedas: Aryas invite all, both men and women, to study them. On the other hand, they condemn modern Hindu literature. They teach that there are three eternal existences, God, the soul and elemental Matter. The soul undergoes transmigration according to the law of karma. Forgiveness is altogether impossible. Salvation comes only by continued well-doing; and the soul, even when released from transmigration, is not absorbed in God. The doctrine to *avatars*, or divine incarnations, is denied. Idolatry is vehemently condemned, and also the practice of killing animals in sacrifice or of offering food on the altar to God. The fire-sacrifice of the Vedas is retained, but is explained as a means of purifying the air. The Hindu form of ancestor-worship, known as the *śradha*, is condemned as useless; and pilgrimage is given up as superstitious.

10. A careful reading of the *Satyārth Prakāśh* shows that the ethical system of the Samaj is crude in the extreme. Many of the laws of Manu in all their barbarity are laid down for use in modern life. For example, the individual is encouraged to kill those whom he regards as monstrously evil men;<sup>20</sup> and the king is advised to have the adulterer burned alive on a red-hot iron bedstead, and the adulteress devoured alive by dogs, in the presence of many men and women.<sup>21</sup> But it is in its marriage laws that the book goes farthest astray. Child-marriage is prohibited,<sup>22</sup> and virgin widows and widowers are allowed to remarry,<sup>23</sup> excellent regulations, as all will agree. But widows and widowers who have lived with their spouses are told not to remarry.<sup>24</sup> Yet for their relief, and for the relief also of husbands and wives in certain circumstances, the law of *niyoga* is laid down.<sup>25</sup> *Niyoga* is simply sexual relationship without marriage. The details are too horrible to transcribe. They may be seen in the book. In 1892 some Aryas brought a law-suit against a Hindu who wrote against *niyoga* calling it adultery, but the case was dismissed.<sup>26</sup> One is glad to hear that many members of the Samaj would now like to repudiate this most immoral legislation, which is equally repulsive to the Hindu and the Christian.

There is another feature of the *Satyārth Prakāśh* which has attracted wide attention. All the outstanding Hindu sects, and Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity as well, are mercilessly criticized in it, and here and there with a good deal of malice and injustice. This section of the book has encouraged Aryas and provided them with very useful ammunition for their controversies, but it has also created vehement hatred against the samaj in many quarters. Dayananda's stinging taunts have been effective in rousing a number of the sects to retaliation and defensive organization. This is noticeably true of the Sikhs,<sup>27</sup> the Jains,<sup>28</sup> the Ahmadiyas,<sup>29</sup> the Muhammadans,<sup>30</sup> and also of Pandit Din Dayal,<sup>31</sup> the founder of the Bharata Dharma Mahamandala.

Dayananda's own methods of controversy, shown in his public debates and also in his writings, have naturally been adopted by his followers. Wherever they go, one hears of slander, passion, and unfair methods; and disturbances in the streets and squares have been pitifully common.

11. I had the privilege of being present, in company with Dr. Griswold, at an Arya Samaj Sunday morning service in Lahore in December, 1912. The place of meeting is a large oblong hall without seats, with a platform at one end and a high narrow gallery at the other. In the floor, in front of the platform there is a square pit, measuring perhaps two feet each way. This is the altar. On one side of the hall a small platform for singers and a harmonium had been placed. When we entered, there was only one man in the hall, and he was laying some pieces of wood in order at the bottom of the square pit. When that was done, he set up a stick of incense on end on the floor at each corner of the pit. Some packets of aromatic herbs and several sacrificial vessels lay on the floor. Men came dropping in, and squatted in front and on the two sides of

the altar began to intone some Sanskrit verses, amongst which we could distinguish some of the verses of *Rigveda*, X 129. This continued about twenty minutes. By that time there were about thirty present. The fire and the incense sticks were then lighted; the aromatic leaves were shed on the fire; and *ghī* (melted butter) was rubbed on the outer edges of the altar. Other verses were now chanted, while the flames rose nearly two feet above the level of the floor. This is the *Havana*, which Aryas are recommended to perform every morning, at the time of their devotions, for the purification of the air. This continued for about fifteen minutes. All then rose to their feet and sat down in various places in the hall. A young man mounted the platform to lead the service, one sat down at the harmonium and a few others gathered round him to sing. There were forty-eight present.

The second part of the service then began. It consisted of the singing of hymns, the repetition of texts (one of them the *gāyātri*), prayer and a sermon, all in Hindi except a few texts which were in Sanskrit. It was just like a Protestant service, and totally unlike any Vedic observance. During this part of the service many boys came in. Before the sermon began there were perhaps two hundred present. Later the number rose to two hundred and fifty. There was no woman or girl present. I am told they are not excluded, but a special service, conducted by a lady, is held at another time and place, which they attend in fair numbers.

12. The death of Dayananda was a great blow to the members of the Samaj; yet the work was carried on with enthusiasm; and the movement has continued to grow at a rapid pace since then. Large sums of money were collected to perpetuate the memory of the founder, and in 1887, the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College was opened in Lahore. This great foundation, in which the flower of the youth of the Arya Samaj receive a modern English education, and also instruction in the religion of the Samaj, forms a very worthy memorial to Dayananda's devotion and energy.

In 1892, the Arya community fell in two. This division is parallel to the first split in the Brahmo camp. As Keshab led out the progressives, and left Debendra and the conservatives behind, so the Arya Samaj broke up into the college of "Cultured" party and the Vegetarian or "Mahatma" party. The former are progressive, stand for modern education and for freedom in diet, and declare that the Arya Samaj is the one true universal religion, which must be taught to all the world; while their opponents favour the ancient Hindu education, stand by vegetarianism and declare that the teaching of the Samaj is pure Hinduism, but not the universal religion.

13. I have failed to obtain printed reports of the work of the Samaj, so that it is rather hard to estimate what they are doing. Their methods, however, are well known. Those members of a local Samaj who pay 1% of their income to the funds elect the managing Committee of the Samaj. The Samajes in each province elect representatives who form the *Pratinidhi Sabha*, or Representative Assembly, of the province. Since the split in 1892, there have been duplicate organizations. There are missionaries and preachers of the Samaj, some paid, others honorary. Most of the paid men were originally Hindu pandits; most of the honorary workers are men who have had an English education. The Samaj also copies other forms of Christian effort. They have their Tract Society, their Stri Samaj or Women's Arya Samaj, their *Arya Kumār Sabhā*, or Young Men's Arya Association (a copy of the Y.M.C.A.), their Orphanages, and their work among the Depressed, which will be noticed elsewhere.<sup>32</sup>

The Samaj is doing a good deal of education. Lala Lajpat Rai writes with regard to the schools and colleges of the progressive party:

“At Lahore it has founded and maintains a first class College, preparing scholars up to the highest standard and for the highest University examinations. This was created in 1886 in sacred memory of its founder, and is called “The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College”. Its objects are to encourage and enforce the study of (a) Hindi literature; (b) classical Sanskrit and the Vedas; and (c) English literature and sciences both theoretical and applied; and furthermore, “to provide means for giving technical education.” It owns considerable property, and has endowments yielding an annual income (including tuition and admission fees etc.) of over Rs. 60,000 (£ 4000). The Principal is honorary, and has held the post with remarkable success since the foundation. On the staff are several of its own alumni, working in a missionary spirit on mere subsistence allowances. Directly or indirectly connected with the college are a number of secondary and primary schools maintained by the Samaj throughout the province, some of which receive the usual grants from the Educational Department. In the United Provinces, also, the Samaj maintains several schools on the same lines as the Anglo-Vedic or Anglo-Sanskrit Schools of the Punjab, their principal Anglo-Vedic school being at Dehra Dun.<sup>33</sup>

The centre and crown of the educational efforts of the Mahatma party is the *Gurukula Mahāvīdyāya* at Hardwar, a great institution, founded in 1902, in which an attempt is being made to give a true Hindu education and to save students from the contaminations both of Hindu home and city life and of Western civilization. It is a most interesting and promising experiment. The situation is all that could be desired; good food is provided, and the physique of the students receives a good deal of attention. Here is what a Christian writes of the conditions of life and study.<sup>34</sup>

“The students are admitted at the age of eight years, and the parents are under written pledge not to remove their sons from the school till the expiry of the 17 years’ course, i.e., till they have reached the age of 25. During the whole of these 17 years they may never once go home or leave the school. Indeed, they are only allowed to have a quarter of an hour’s interview once a year with their parents, and that in presence of their teachers. . . . During the whole of their long course they are watched day and night by their teachers and housefathers. Without these they may not go out even for a walk. No woman may approach the Gurukula. They live a simple, hardy life, on strictly vegetarian diet. . . . They wear the saffron dress of the religious orders.”

There are many points to admire in the life and the methods of study. Almost all the work is done in the vernacular, not in English. Great care is taken to train the character, as well as the mind, and the foundation of a true love of India is laid from day today. One wonders, however, whether the exclusion of home influences is wise, and whether anything like a sound literary education can be given, while Dayananda’s interpretation of the Veda is retained. There are other Gurukulas at Gujranwala, Farukhabad and elsewhere.

The Samaj does also a good deal for the education of girls. They have a very successful boarding school at Jullundur.

Lala Lajpat Rai, struck with the work of the Salvation Army, started recently in Lahore the Vedic Salvation Army.

In the Panjab and the United Provinces the Samaj has done valuable work by its testimony to monotheism, its opposition to idolatry and to other superstitions and by its educational work. Its polemic against caste, child-marriage, priestcraft, pilgrimage, and self-torture in the name of religion, is all to the good, although members of the Samaj are still bound by caste,<sup>35</sup> and many have not given up child-marriage. In these matters there is far more talk



than action. The great expansion of the Samaj in recent years<sup>36</sup> gives promise of still farther growth, and the zeal of the members is proved by the very generous way in which they subscribe to the funds. Dayananda's praise of all things Indian, and his defence of the Vedas and of transmigration have proved very popular.

Yet there is no risk involved in prophesying that the Samaj will not have a great history. In the very sources of its present strength there is that which will inevitably lead to its ruin. The false interpretation of the Vedas, on which the whole structure rests, will inevitable crumble as enlightenment proceeds. The attempt to retain much that is old and out-worn, instead of transcending it, is another source of weakness. The retention of the doctrine of transmigration and karma is in itself most dangerous. So long as that remains, a healthy monotheism is impossible,<sup>37</sup> and caste cannot be rooted out.<sup>38</sup>

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1907, at the Samaj Anniversary in Lahore, Prof. Lala Sain Das, M.A., gave an address in which he asked the assembly to realize how little work they were doing in comparison with Christian Missions, how weak they were spiritually and how important socially through the caste system. He added:

“Two new forces are now at work in India (1) English education, and (2) Christian evangelisation. The first formerly a source of weakness to the Hindu society, has now proved a source of strength to the Arya Samaj. Superstition at once gave way before the scientific education. In order, therefore, to fully avail ourselves of the former and to nullify the effect of the latter, we should open as many schools as possible where all the latest discoveries in science should be taught and education on national and modern lines should be imparted free to as large a number as our funds permit, and, secondly to carry the torch of Vedic light to the remotest corners of India at least where the Arya Samaj is still unrepresented. But then there comes in the question of funds. Our rich men are not going to part with their money, because they have to minister to their own wants, to those of their sons and daughters and relations. Then there is a question of time. Now those who can spare time, won't do it, because they have to attend to this business and to that business.”<sup>39</sup>

An article appeared in Lahore in December, 1912, by Dr. Gokal Chand, Barrister, Lahore, in which he declares that the Samaj is gradually losing its intensity, and tries to discover the causes of this weakening. He puts it down, first, to the want of a Scripture, a book of spiritual instruction which the ordinary man can take up and find help in: “the members of the Arya Samaj do not read the Vedas.” Secondly he notes they have no religious ministers doing pastoral work among the people. Thirdly, they want missionaries settled each in his district with an organization and assistants, just like Christian missionaries. Fourthly, they want men who have renounced the world and will live only for the Samaj.

LITERATURE - *General*: Dr. H.D. Griswold, art. *Arya Samaj* in ERE. *Hand-Book of the Arya Samaj*, by Pandit Vishnu Lal Sharma, Allahabad, the Indian Press, 1912, 6 as. (The best official account of the rise of the sect, its opinions and work.) BIOGRAPHY: The Autobiography is published in Durga Prasad's translation of the *Satyarth Prakash* (see below). *Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj Ka Jivan Chritra*, by Pandit Lekh Ram and Lala Atma Ram, Lahore, 1897 (the standard biography; in Hindi) *The Life and Teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati*, by Bawa Chhajju Singh, Addison Press, 1903, two vols. DAYANANDA'S WORKS: *Rigvedadhashya* (a Hindi commentary on the *Rigveda*. *Rigvedadibhashya Bhumika* (Hindi introduction to the commentary on the *Rik*). *An English Translation of the Satyarth Prakash* by Durga Prasad, Lahore, Virjanand Press, 1908. *The Ocean of Mercy* (an English translation of Dayananda's tract on Cow-killing), by Durga Prasad, Lahore, Virjanand Press, 1889, CRITICISM: Chirol's *Indian*

*Unrest*, chap. VIII. *The Niyoga Doctrine of the Arya Samaj*, by Ruchi Ram Sahni, Lahore, 1896. *Pandit Dayanand Unveiled*, by S.N. Agnihotri, Lahore, The Tribune Press, 1891. *The Dayanandi Interpretation of the Word "Deva" in the Rig Veda*, by H. D. Griswold, Ludhiana, 1897. DEFENCE: *The Arya Samaj, Its Aims and Teachings*, by Lala Lajpat Rai, *Contemporary Review*, May 1910. *The Arya Samaj and its Detractors* by Munshi Ram and Ram Deva, Hardwar, Satya Dharm Pracharak Press, 1911. *Agnihotri Demolished* by Rambhaji Datta, Lahore, 1891.

## II

### THE ARYA SAMAJ A NON-POLITICAL BODY

The Arya Samaj in its early days was dubbed by jealous Christian Missionaries and enemical Muslim fanatics as a political society with anti-British tendencies. This was, however, not true. The Samaj was purely a socio-religious institution aiming at the propagation of the Vedic way of life. The leaders of the Arya Samaj of both the Gurukul and the D.A.V. sections believed that the establishment of the British government in India was providential and its continuance was essential for some centuries to come for the unhampered preachings of the Samaj. To substantiate this, we give below the statements of eminent Arya Samajists like Mahatma Munshi Ram - the well known Swami Shradhananda -, Professor Ram Deva of the Gurukul, Kangri, and Professor (later Sir) Gokal Chand Narang of the D.A.V. College, Lahore, from *The Arya Samaj and Its Detractors: Vindication*, compiled by the first two gentlemen and printed and published by Pandit Anant Ram Sharma, Manager, Sat Dharma Pracharak Press, Gurukul, Kangri, in 1910. (Editor PPP.)

*In the words of Professor Ram Deva, later Principal of the Gurukul, Kangri and editor of the Vedic Magazine:*

He [Swami Dayananda] hailed the British as his allies and regarded the establishment of British Rule in the country as a providential act because he honestly believed that India needed respite in order to organise her intellectual and moral resources and to start upon the right path of self-realization. He had laboured hard to impress this truth on the minds of his followers and his feeling was often manifested in the writings and utterances of his trusted lieutenants. (Part i, p. 11)

. . . The Society is for religious and social reforms, but has no hands in political matters, and he who in the face of its printed and widely circulated principles asserts to be a political body is either a malicious person or one whose abode ought to be in the Lunatic Asylum.

Verily, the Arya Samaj is under a cloud of unmerited suspicion as the early Christians were. (Part i, p. 29)

. . . The suspicion of the British officials still continues in spite of the manifestoes, declarations, explanations, and sincere loyalty of the Aryas. (Part i, pp. 29-30)

. . . There is no incitement to arms against the foreigner, no denial of the fact (which as we have shown, Dayananda always warmly acknowledged) that we have reason to be grateful to the British for coming to our rescue. There is no political element in his statement. (Part i, p. 85)

. . . For centuries to come British Rule is essential to the orderly development and peaceful progress of the Indian people, and if they are ever to dispense with this providential aid, it, will be by setting about the work of religious and social reform and the eradication of

pestilential social evils and this work can only go on when there is peace and order which the Pax Britannica guarantees. (Part i, p. 86)

However much Dayanand lamented the fall of the Aryas, he knew, as we have shown above, that they are not yet in a position to dispense with the aid of the British, and that British Rule is, at present the only hope for India. (Part i, p. 112)

. . . On the contrary, it appears that he neither had any faith in constitutional agitation nor in the propaganda of the extremists. (Part i, p. 124)

. . . It [the Arya Samaj] has never pinned any faith to political agitation for it knows its futility. (Part i, p. 126)

. . . In fact, the Aryas do not like to be classed with Hindus, and many Census reporters can bear testimony to the fact that the Aryas gave them a lot of trouble when they set down the Arya-Samaj as a sect of the Hindus. (Part i, p. 126)

. . . The Arya Samaj has no political activities. . . . . No prominent Arya Samajist, with the single exception of Lala Lajpat Rai, has ever engaged in political agitation and he too was a non-politician before the year 1905. Every body knows, that Lala Lajpat Rai has never engaged in any anti-British propaganda, and even his dabbling in politics of a harmless nature evoked public protests from Mahatma Munshi Ram and private protests from Lala Hansraj and his other colleagues. (Part i, pp. 283-84)

*Professor (later Sir) Gokal Chand Narang of the D.A.V. College, Lahore, writing to the 'Civil and Military Gazette', Lahore, said:*

. . . The Arya Samaj has never preached the gospel of excommunication of the foreigners. It has been greatfully conscious of the blessings of security of life and properly and religious neutrality which it enjoys under *Pax Britannica*. . .

Aryas must indeed be fools to wish for the withdrawal of British protection, to be left to the tender mercies of a people whose Prophet called the sword the greatest argument and extolled it as the key to the gates of Heaven. Long before the present situation was even dreamt of any body, the Aryan temples resounded with the loyal song of one of the foremost hymnwriters of the Arya Samaj who says - "Under thy just Government, the lion and the lamb drink at one place. May thy rule. Mother Victoria, extend from East to West!" (Part ii, p. 81-82)

Arya Samaj as a body has absolutely nothing to do with any criticism of Government measures, and I assure you. Sir, that during the fifteen years or so I have been in touch with the Arya Samaj I have not heard a single speech condemning or criticising the Government or its officials. (Part ii, p. 82)

It presents a strong justification for the British rule over India, for no Arya can be such a fool as to deny the superiority of the British over the Indians in the knowledge of sciences and the possession of a superior character. (Part ii, p. 85)

Lala Lajpat Rai was certainly a prominent leader of the Arya Samaj, as well as one of the prominent political leaders of his country, but his political views had nothing to do with the Arya Samaj, nor his Samajic views anything to do with his political principles. (Part ii, p. 90)

*After the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie by Madan Lal, said to be a dupe of Krishna Varma, the 'Arya Patrika' wrote on Jan. 24, 1909, about the latter:*

Krishna Varma is a pest and it behoves the leaders of Indian Society to take early and effective measures to rescue Indian Students in England from the clutches of this unscrupulous, cowardly and fiendish doctrinaire and his equally sneaking emissaries. He is not an Indian. He was born an Indian, but he has forfeited all title to the sacred name by deliberately going against the traditions, civilization, culture and religion of his illustrious forefathers. (Part i, p. 266)

*Mahatma Munshi Ram on occasion wrote in the 'Sat Dharm Prakash:*

. . . But the mere handful of Arya Samajists among whom the practical Aryas can be counted on finger's ends can act under the protection of no other Government than the British according to their own tenets and faith. It is not the duty of the followers of the Vedas to take part in these political movements whose object is to create a chaos in the present administration of the country. (Part i, p. 136)

*In the course of his lecture delivered on the occasion of the 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Lahore Arya Samaj, Mahatma Munshi Ram (Swami Shradhananda) said:*

It is my object to prove that the Arya Samaj, as a body, has nothing whatever to do with any of these three parties, that it does not long for temporal power and care for "loaves and fishes" and that in some respects its interests are decidedly opposed to the interests of India's politicians (Part ii, p. 93)

My father who had taken much part in the measures taken after the mutiny to restore order often related his experiences to me. I had come to the conclusion that for a century at least the continuance of British Raj was essential to the peaceful progress and orderly development of the country.

I believe, now, that for another three hundred years British supremacy alone can ensure peace and order in this land and that if this guarantee of peace was taken away, all facilities for advancement along evolutionary lines would vanish. (Part ii, p. 111)

I must say here that I hold no brief for real seditionists. If there be any in the Arya Samaj who preaches political assassination and murder, which are sins of the deepest dye, pick him out and torture him to death if you will. He is no Arya. If there be any whose aim it be to subvert the Government, punish him. (Part ii, p. 117)

**kwSI nwQ 'iPdw'**

Hm Dmé jwn kr hI AwE smwj myN Qy,

bySk smwj kw hY Xh ijÆmo jwN hmwrw [. . .

BUGol ko smJqy Apnw vqn hYN hm qo,

kuC Ek hI nhIN hY ihñdoÆqwN hmwrw ]

goroN sy hmko nPrq kwloN sy ho muh' bq,

ho skqw hI nhIN Xh vhmō gumwN hmwrw ]

ANgRjI kOm ko hm Bwrq sy #XoN inkwlyN,

Eysw inXm bqwaO qo hY khW hmwrw ]

(eñdR, PvéRI, 1908, pN. 129)

hmny hI asko bdjn Apny sy kr ilXw hY,

dr-Asl mOrly qo hY kdRdwN hmwrw ]...  
qum byksUr mujirm hmko bnw rhy ho,  
kuC kwm mugitvXwnw dyKw khW hmwrw ]  
mu-kI muAwmlon sy #Xw hY hmyN qA-luk  
sq@ Dmí kI eSwXq mjhb hY hmwrw ]  
(eñdR, PvérI, 1908, pN. 130)

Footnotes:

1. *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London, 1924, pp. 101-29.
2. Republished as an introduction to the English translation of the *Satyarth Prakash* by Durga Prasad.
3. For the name of the town I am indebted to Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson of Rajkot, and also for the names of the father and the son.
4. For the remainder of Dayananda's life, see his *Life* by Bawa Chhajju Singh.
5. Chhajju Singh, 476-532, ODL., I, 135; 396 ff, Below, pp. 218, 226.
6. P. 302. Also *Sanskrit Vidhi*, II; 42.
7. Chhajju Singh, 726-30.
8. *Ibid.*, 721.
9. *Ibid.*, 730.
10. P. 358, below.
11. *Indian Unrest*, 109 ff.
12. P. 358, below.
13. *Indian Evangelical Review*, January, 1892.
14. *Biographical Essays*, 170.
15. *Biographical Essays*, 170.
16. *Religions of India*, p. 108. For the materials used in this discussion I am indebted to Dr. Griswold's pamphlet, *The Dayanandi Interpretation of the word Deva*.
17. P. 173, below.
18. *Agnihotri Demolished*, by Rambhaji Datta.
19. Cf. the Tiyas, below, p. 313.
20. Durga Prasad's translation, 203.
21. *Ib.*, 204, 207.
22. *Ib.*, 132.
23. *Ib.*, 156.
24. *Ib.*, 156.
25. Durga Prasad's translation, 156-61.
26. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *The Niyoga Doctrine of the Arya Samaj*, 35-6.
27. P. 340, below.
28. P. 329, below.
29. P. 137, below.
30. P. 351, below.
31. P. 316, below.
32. P. 371, below.
33. *Contemporary Review*, May, 1910.
34. Rev. W.E.S. Holland in *East and West*, June, 1907.
35. A low-caste man wanted to send his son to the D.A.V. College, Lahore but there was so much opposition that the authorities kept him out.
36. The last census shows that they now number 243,000.
37. See the author's *Crown of Hinduism*, 392-407.

38. *Ib.*, 179-181; 191.

39. Reported in the *Bombay Guardian*, Dec., 14, 1907.

***THE SINGH SABHA AND OTHER  
SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN THE PUNJAB  
1997, THIRD Edition***

1. The whole book is typed in Garamond font (English UK), with a consistent font format [i.e., size, bold (for titles), Italics, Underlines ect.]
2. Typographical errors such as shown in the example are corrected wherever noticed.  
Example: Page 37, line 26 of book and page 56, line 8 of the soft copy of **Spirit of the Sikh (Part I)**:  
*known as "Sikh" or Disciple".* IN the given phrase the inverted comas before disciple are missing which have been fixed.  
Besides this corrections like making spaces before and after certain marks (like ; : , . ! ?), consistent with the standard space conventions. The Standards are No space before any of the above shown marks, one space after ; & , and two spaces after every ! : . ? mark.
3. All the Grammatical errors have been left as they are and spelling mistakes corrected according to British English which has been used by the author. At certain places to convey the essence the author has changed the form of words which are not permissible and hence account for grammatical errors. Example: Word "slightinglly" appearing on page number 43 of the book and 29 of the soft copy of the **Spirit of the Sikh (Part I)**. All other spelling mistakes, which do not account for the above given explanation have been changed. All the mistakes noticed, but not changed for the lack of surety are listed in the file named mistakes sent along. We can correct them as per your instructions.
4. The present text is typed on A4 page (Size 11.69/ 8.27 inches) with one-inch margin on all the four sides.

**THE DEV SAMAJ**  
**PROFESSOR S. P. KANAL**

A great movement has its origin and explanation in the heart and mind of its founder and it is the heart and mind of the founder that must be explored.

Dev Atma's first name, as given by his parents, was Shiv Narayan Agnihotri. He was born to revered Pandit Rameshwar Agnihotri, and revered Shrimati Mohan Kunwar on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1850, at Akbarpur, district Kanpur, in the Uttar Pradesh of India. His family were descendants from Kanya-Kubj Brahmins who are mentioned as among the highest *gotras* in the scale of caste in the classic Ramayana by the famous poet Balmiki. His grand ancestors lived in a town, Rewari, in district Fatehpur (U.P.), which was founded by one of his ancestors, Shri Rev. by name. He performed a sacrificial ritual on such a grand scale that the family acquired the surname of Agnihotri. As the generations passed, the family grew, and some migrated to other parts of the state. One of such ancestors, his great grandfather, Pandit Ganga Prasad, was a man of parts with extraordinary dynamism. He rose to be *Devan* or Minister of Raja Sarup Singh of Akori, near Akbarpur and this is how the family came to Akbarpur. He built a big zamindari in 25 villages and made a large fortune for himself. He had his only son in Shri Ram Jiwan, Dev Atma's grandfather. He had all his learnings for the life of the spirit. He, therefore, took only a limited interest in the care of the big estate left to him by his father. He spent a major portion of his time and energy in meditations and prayers. He got up at about 2 or 3 a.m. and with a rosary in hand he performed his devotion. He kept a lotion of peppers with him which he would dab in his eyes when he felt sleepy, and admonish them thus: "You are interfering with my devotion. Take this as your punishment." At the break of day, in the company of some Brahmins, he daily walked as many as six miles to the Ganges and dropped sweetened flour in the ant-holes on the way and in the Ganges for the fish. He made a pilgrimage to Badri Nath in the North, Jagan Nath in the East, and Rameshwaram in the South. At the advanced age of 72, he set out on a pilgrimage to Dwaraka in the West, in spite of the warning of his astrologer that he would not be able to come back and the pleading of his family. He died on the way to this pilgrimage.

His father, Pandit Rameshwar Agnihotri had religious temperament. He worshipped his *Thakurs* and idols every day. He kept religious fasts. He distributed flour and sweet things in charity on religious occasions. His mother was no less given to religion. She craved for a 'guru'. Once a *Sadhu* agreed to be her 'Guru' and initiated her and gave her '*guru-mantra*.' She repeated this 'guru-mantra' to the end of her life.

This was the family culture in which Dev Atma was nurtured in which the attractions for the life of sensuality and for worldly ambitions were devalued and a premium was put on the life of the spirit.

Dev Anna was not only fortunate in the family culture of the spirit but blessed beyond description in his psychological inheritance. He says, "The first psychic force which evolved in me during my childhood was an extraordinary and wonderful love for good and this mighty force made it imperative for me to side with all that I felt to be good in my own relation and in relation of others and to refuse to side with all that I believed and felt to be wrong in relation to myself and others." As a boy he read in one of the books that it was harmful for children to put on ornaments. His sensitive soul was touched by this light. He used to put on ornaments. That was the practice



with well-to-do families. It was a badge of social distinction. He, however, decided to give up this. This was his first promise with reform. His parents were opposed to his proposal. But he prevailed upon them to allow him to put off ornaments altogether.

Further as a school boy he felt that if it was right and proper for boys to have education, it was right and proper for girls, too, to have education. In his small village community in the orthodox state of the U.P. where conformity was in inverse proportion to its smallness, he dared to face the giant of canonicity in his own house. He started educating his niece and his cousin's wife. His strength was strength of truth and he was triumphant.

When he had completed his education at his village primary school, he was not satisfied. He wanted more education, he came to know that through a competition he could go and get his education at the Thomason Engineering College, Roorkee. He successfully completed and was given admission in 1866 session. His father, and especially his mother, were both opposed to his leaving the village. But he saw that he must break through this orthodoxy. He told his parents that he would go with or without their co-operation. At last they yielded and his father took him to Roorkee for admission.

At Roorkee he became conscious of the food inhibitions of his family. He belonged to that community of Brahmins - Kanya Kubj Brahmins - to whom it was an anathema to take food prepared even by a Brahmin not belonging to their family. Here in the college he saw that all the Hindu boys took their meals in a common kitchen in which food was prepared by some Brahmins. It made him to think. Thinking explodes tradition. He came to the conclusion that there was nothing religious to have food prepared by a Brahmin of one's own family. He must share common dining arrangements. When he went back after completion of his session he told his parents of his new determination to take food with all other Hindu boys. He went further. He wanted to do away with all food inhibitions which were not based on a moral principle. Emotionally he did not like to take sweets from a Muhammadan shop. Intellectually he saw that such food untouchability was against human fellowship. He himself went to purchase sweets from a Muhammadan shop and took them.

All these small incidents are big with meaning. They reflect his reformatory character, i.e., his moral sensitivity to social wrongs, his freedom from false public opinion, his determination, and executive power. However, there was no further development of his reformatory acuity, here at Roorkee.

It was when he came to Lahore in 1873, at the age of 23, that there was a spurt growth of his reformatory acuity. A friend of his, introduced him to *Babu* Navin Chandra Roy, the leader of the Lahore branch of the Brahmo Samaj. He was drawn to him and his Brahmo Samaj. Brahmo Samaj was the spearhead of reforms in religious and social life of the Hindus. Dev Atma's evolving soul whole heartedly accepted these reforms in religious and social life. He went beyond it. He provided outstanding leadership to carry these reforms in the lives of his people at large. He had a magnificent personality. He was a gifted orator and people hung on his lips. He utilized his gifts of figure, form and speech to produce a mass awakening to the needs of renovating the Hindu society in its religious rites and practices and social customs and conventions. In 1875, he started at his own expense, two journals, one in Urdu called the *Bradar-i-Hind* and the other in Hindi entitled the *Hindu Bandhav*, to 'cultivate the spirit of reform in the country.' He wielded a powerful pen in the service of the reforms and the spirit of the reforms. He felt unbounded sympathy for Indian women and

greatly concerned about injustices done to them in the form of child marriage, enforced widowhood, denial of opportunities of education and career. He was pained at the injustices done to the untouchables in the form of social humiliations and denial of opportunities for education and better professions. He shouted as a man who saw a house on fire to help the occupants of the house to wake up and run for life; he became a voice; irresistible and irrepressible.

His voice was the voice of every cell in his body, for he completely lived the reforms he preached. Though he came from a strict orthodox Brahmin family, he had given up untouchability in food as a student at Roorkee. He educated his own wife, and trained her to be an outstanding public worker in those dark days. When she passed on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1880, a gentleman from Multan thus wrote about her: 'She belonged to the class of those who deserve the title of the Emancipators of Women.'

He remarried a widow from Bengal, though he was a U. P. born. He broke caste shackles in the marriages of his children. There was such a complete identity between his intellect and his will.

He was an acknowledged reformer of Hindu society, when he came to establish Dev Samaj on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1887. In his new society, which was his new experiment in moral life in interpersonal relations, he put into action all the social reforms for which he had fought all these years. He made it imperative for the members of his society not to get their daughters married before the age of sixteen and their sons before the age of eighteen. Hindu Marriage Act of even 1955 does not stipulate that the girl must be sixteen years old at the time of marriage. Again, he made it a condition for members of his society not to indulge in bigamy. Indian Government has made bigamy a crime for the Hindus as late as 1955. He had made it a law of the membership of his society in the year 1912.

He created a social climate in which the members of his society could have all encouragement and praise for inter-caste and interstate marriages. Caste carries no prestige, no glamour, no force for decision in its favour in the Dev Samaj. The last census report recorded more inter-caste marriage in the Dev Samaj than the total number of inter-caste marriages in all other religious societies put together.

Dev Anna created social atmosphere in Dev Samaj which killed many a rite based on superstitions. Here is a typical case of freedom from bondage to superstitious rites. Says a disciple of Dev Atma: "Along with breaking of the caste, I was determined to break every allied bondage to superstition. I married when the 'star' was said to have been set and marriages were almost banned. I chose that so called most inauspicious time as the time of my wedding. I refused to ride a mare in order to go to the bride's house, which was the usual practice in those days among the Hindus. I drove in a four-wheeler. I was the first to shake off wearing centuries-old apparel considered then the only fit dress for wedding. I put on full dress of an ordinary educated man. My marriage was celebrated in my town not by a priest but by a worker of the Dev Samaj and an illustrious son of Bhagwan Dev Atma." To enter Dev Samaj is to experience freedom from bondage to centuries old superstitions and rites based on superstitions.

The moral culture of Dev Samaj further purifies the atmosphere at the various ritual occasions. At the occasion of marriage for example, no intoxicating drinks are passed, no cigarettes are offered, no meat diet is served, no dancing girls are engaged for entertainment.

Most of the social injustices of which the nineteenth century became conscious, concerned women's plight. Dev Atma, like other reformers, e.g. Prof. Karve, saw that the future of women lay in education. Education alone could open for women opportunities for enlightenment and independence, professional and public life. He made women's education as the chief plank of his society's contribution to social reforms. Dev Samaj's services in women's education came to be publicly appreciated and acknowledged for it belied the fear of the public that education would lead women the wrong way. The Dev Samaj institutions not only provided high standard of education, but also inculcated moral culture of the highest quality. Its students turned out to be good daughters, devoted and self-sacrificing wives and responsible mothers. If ever an objective and impartial history of the personalities and movements which helped women's education in the Punjab is written, Dev Atma and Dev Samaj will occupy the most commanding place in it. The prominent role which Dev Atma has played in women's education is indicated by the fact that Dev Samaj Girls High School, Ferozepore, started in 1901, was the first Hindu Girls' High School in Punjab. This school produced the first M.B., B.S., in the Punjab, who, in course of time, became the Principal of the Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi. It gave the first B.A., B.T. to Punjab. This Girls' High School developed and has added Post-Graduate and Training institutes which are producing hundreds of graduates and thousands of teachers for schools of Punjab and Delhi states. A university committee in its report acknowledged that "this institution (Dev Samaj College for Women, Ferozepore) has done pioneer work in the field of education." An education minister of Punjab said: "The Government is grateful to this pioneer institution which has fulfilled nearly 50% of the needs of women's education in the state." The Chief Minister of the State remarked: "The emphasis on right conduct which is a feature of this college marks it out as the unique institution of the State."

At the close of 1920, Dev Samaj was running 27 educational institutions. The peculiarity of these institutions from the point of view of social change was that most of them were for girls and in villages. The education in the villages had functional character. It helped villagers observe principles of hygiene for themselves and their cattle, to utilize spare time in gainful occupation, to develop happy interpersonal relationship, to give up evil habits like drinking. The society also opened two *Nari Ashrams* for education and training of elderly women. It set up four widows' homes for training widows into self-help. The success of the educational programme of Dev Samaj can be judged from the fact that there is 100% literacy in the society.

Before we close the description of the reformatory role of Dev Samaj it is important to mention the exceptional service rendered by the society to criminal tribes in Sialkot district. These tribesmen were a curse to the neighbouring villages and even baffled the most rigid surveillance of the police. Since Dev Samaj specializes in improvement of ethical behaviour, it achieved marvellous success. The conduct of these criminal tribes improved to such an extent that in August 1935 the Punjab Government exempted all the inmates of the Settlement from the operation of the Criminal Tribes Act and conferred the rights and privileges of free citizenship.

## II

However magnificent may be the contribution of the Dev Samaj in the field of social reform and education, its unique contribution is in the new conception of religion. Dev Atma had in his inheritance got the germs of love of truth and goodness and hatred for untruth and evil. These matured in course of time and gave him a life consecrated to the pursuit of truth and goodness. He saw round him the reign of untruth and evil in human character. He felt it as his destiny to devote

himself to this task of change of heart of mankind. So on his 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday, i.e. 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1882, he took the following life-vow:

“May beautiful truth and good-ness  
My foremost aim represent  
And in the service of the world  
May my life be fully spent.”

At this time he interpreted his life of truth and goodness and his dedication to the service of mankind in theistic framework of thought. Whatever good thought occurred to him, whatever higher feelings prompted him, he believed that they were inspiration from God and whatever he did was therefore God's own work through the instrumentality of his soul moving harmoniously with the mover. However, his interpretation of God was less metaphysical and more ethical. He did not believe that the highest life is meditation on God and the highest salvation in union or mergence with God. Hence he never turned into a mystic, experiencing frequent trances. He was essentially *ethical* theism. He did not limit himself to singing praises of God. He shouted against untruth and evil in human heart and called mankind to evolve life of truth and goodness on earth. For him God was not truth. Truth was God. This distinction can be well illustrated by an important event in the life of Brahmo Samaj, of which he was an *acharya*. Babu Keshab Chandra Sen was the founder and leading light of the Brahmo Samaj of India. He had to his credit the enactment of the civil marriage law by which a girl under fourteen and a boy under eighteen could not be married in British India. This was a big step in the reformation of Indian society. But when an offer of marriage for his daughter, then under fourteen, with the minor Maharaj of Kutch Behar, then aged fifteen, came to him, he accepted it. This was most painful news to Dev Atma. He was the only Brahmo in the Punjab who openly protested against it. Babu Keshab Chandra's own conduct exposed the ethical weakness of Brahmo theism. He defended his step as a 'Heaven's Command'. He went further to say, "If anybody believes that it is God's command that he should commit theft, who is more infallible than God Himself to decide whether he is right or wrong."

This type of thinking, exposed more than anything else how Brahmo theism lacked an ethical foundation.

An ethical theism could never brook such calvinistic reasoning. It could not hold God as above the laws of good and evil. Dev Atma left Babu Keshab Chandra's Brahmo Samaj and joined the new group of the Brahmos called Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. But the chronic trouble continued in the new organisation. It lacked an ethical foundation. He made futile efforts to remould Brahmo Samaj to his ethical ideal. As a last resort he broke his connection of twelve years with it to set up a new society, the Dev Dharma, on the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1887, in which he made moral life central and crucial to the religious life of man, and its cultivation the supreme task of religion. To know what kind of moral life a society achieves, one is not to study its scriptures or its topmen. We must go and stay with its ordinary members or attend its group meetings.

### III

A revolution in the philosophy of the Dev Samaj occurred in the year 1895 when the founder of the Dev Samaj, Dev Atma, gave up his belief in God which he had nursed with passion and care for better part of his life. He had been studying philosophy inspired by science. His soul became witness to the truth of the scientific method-as the only true method for getting knowledge of the truths about whatever is. He saw as clear as the daylight that just as speculative Astronomy

and Physics had yielded to the scientific method, revealed or rational religion must yield to it too. No wonder the Dev Dharma, the science of religion he founded, is not in the linear development of other systems of religion but is divergent from them.

This was the beginning of a long, lonely, and arduous journey to truth which Dev Atma continued upto 1929, the last year of his life. His philosophy or religion is contained in *Vigyan Mulak Mat aur Kalpna Mulak Mat* (1900), *Atma Ke Astitva Ke Vishe Men Mithya aur Kalpit Vishvas* (1903), *Mujh Men Dev Jivan Ka Wkas*, Part I (1909), *Devshastra* (1910, 1915, 1929), and *Vigyan-mulak Tattva Shiksha* (1912). His philosophy of universe is that it is self-existent, and self sufficient governed by laws which are universal, immutable, inviolable and eternal. Hence there is no creator or sustainer of the universe. There is no room for miracles. Whatever exists as embodied. So, there is no possibility of disembodied souls or God. Whatever exists is subject to change and laws are the statement of relation of one set of conditions to another set of conditions. Hence there is no changeless soul or God.

His philosophy of soul is that soul is the name of the highly evolved and complex form of the same life-force which in primitive stages is found in unicellular existences and this (i.e., the life-force in unicellular existences) again in its turn has evolved from the inorganic forces in Nature. Human soul, like its body, is subject to change, growth, decay and death. There are conditions which maintain and strengthen the health of the body and there are conditions which cause disease and devitalise the body. In the same way there are conditions of the health and the diseases of soul. The soul maintains and strengthens itself when it engages itself in thought and actions which do good to others. The soul gets diseased when it indulges in a thought or an action which harms others. The pursuit of the pleasures of appetites, self, children, wealth, association and false beliefs, etc., etc., develop into low loves for them. These low loves cause low hates and the two together lead us into untruth and evil. Hence they constitute the diseases of the soul. When we seek pleasure in the good of others or altruism, we live healthy soul-life. The ideal for human life is not pleasure or happiness, or state of *anand*. Pleasure, in all its forms, has the tendency to deviate us into untruth and evil, and therefore ruins soul-life. The ideal for human life is freedom from low loves and low hates and evolution of altruistic feelings of appreciation, reverences, gratitude and disinterested service, it is to seek a disease-free and robust healthy life of the soul. Just as we need certain physical conditions to maintain physical health, we need certain spiritual conditions to maintain the health and strength of the soul. The healthy environment for a human soul is rapport with a soul who has lived life of truth and goodness, i.e., who is Devatma, with feelings of faith, reverence, gratitude and love. Religion is the worship of Devatma, rapport with whom enlightens and strengthens an individual, to see and discharge his duties in relation to the four kingdoms of Nature - human, animal, vegetable, and inanimate and thus establish *Eka* with the Universe.

#### IV

The above is a bird's eye-view of the contribution of the Dev Samaj to social change and education, in strengthening the moral fibres of human society, its unique philosophy of the universe and soul. The fourth aspect of the religion of Dev Samaj concerns the position of the founder, Dev Atma in the world of religion. When Dev Atma joined Brahmo Samaj in 1873, and became its *acharya* within a year, he accepted its belief that each soul was sufficient unto himself to have direct communion with God. This belief had come to Brahmo Samaj from Protestantism. Dev Atma soon found, his belief to be untenable. His personal experience showed him that those who developed rapport with him through reverence were converted from sinful and selfish life, whereas those in the Samaj who sought direct communion with God through meditation failed to give up

sinful and selfish life. He had courage to challenge the belief in the efficacy of direct communion with God for men except heavenly-born prophet. By the end of 1886, he wrote three articles on the 'Necessity of a Guru for the guidance and advancement of people in higher life.' He separated himself from the main body, and tended the spiritual evolution of a few of his followers who accepted his guidance as a Guru. This brought a hornet's nest about his ears. All kinds of obstacles were put in his ministry. So he set a society of Dev Samaj.

At this stage, though he believed in the need of Guru and declared himself as commissioned by God to be Guru, he still held that each soul was divine and it only needed tending by a Guru. His experience showed the falsity of this belief too. He found how even the best of his followers fell very much short of the ideal life and there were others who even betrayed the mission. There is no other than him who loved truth and goodness. So on the sixth anniversary of the Dev Samaj, on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1893, he declared himself as '*Saviour*' and he entitled his disciple as '*Sewaks*.' Double worship-the worship of God and worship of Dev Atma-was introduced. The *Dev Guru Stotar*, embodying the characteristics of Dev Anna's life was sung by his 'sewaks' in order to realize the ideal life of Dev Atma through his inspiration.

Naturally after the rejection of belief in God, he eliminated worship of God. He remained the only worshipful being for his society.

Uptill 1909, he still held that there were differences of degree between him and fellow human beings. He had complete love of truth and goodness, whereas a scientist had partial love of truth, and an altruist had a partial love of goodness. His further researches with human psychology and his own psychology revealed a fundamental difference. The human psychology is under the sway of the principle of pleasure. Hence the highest achievements of men, i.e. altruistic feelings, like compassion, even disposes him to untruth and evil. Marx's compassion for the exploited labour, for example, led him to advocate untruth and violence for bringing about change in the economic structure of society. All altruistic virtues of men are infected with an aspect of untruth and evil. His own psychology was entirely different. His thought, and actions were under the determination of the principle of truth and goodness. There was no disposition towards untruth and evil. On the contrary, there was complete repulsion for untruth and evil. He therefore called his soul *Devatma*, i.e., a soul which has all-sided love of truth and goodness and all-sided hatred for untruth, and evil. He termed soul of man as *manush atma*, i.e., a soul which is under the sway of pleasure principle. There is an unbridgeable gulf between *manushatma* and *Devatma*. *Manushatma* is inherently incapable to rise to be *Devatma*. In the course of evolution, he is the first and only *Devatma*. The religious founders of the past and present, i.e., Rishis, Munis, Tirthankars, Buddhas, Messiahs, Messengers, prophets, etc., were and are *manushatmas* and therefore none of them can be a worshipful being. It is with this belief that religion of Dev Samaj attained to full maturity. The third edition of *Devashastra* of 1929 makes this distinction explicit, though the distinction was accepted much earlier and became formal condition of membership in 1926.

In 1920, Dev Samaj touched the zenith of its glory. It had entrenched itself as a New Religion challenging in truth and excellence of its moral and spiritual achievement all the religions of the world. It claimed itself to be the one true and only religion of mankind on the basis of the originality of its truth and the absolute uniqueness of its founder.

In 1920 Dev Samaj had one hundred and eleven life-workers and lay workers, which constitute the hall of greatness of Dev Samaj to this day. It carried out propagation work in more

than 100 stations of Frontier Province, Delhi, Sindh, Baluchistan, U.P. and Bengal. On an average it conducted six thousand meetings that year. Its membership was not large. This is not surprising, for, it demands as a *pre-condition* of membership: (a) the fulfilment of higher standard of moral conduct, (b) calls for complete rejection of the past religious tradition of theism, (c) acceptance of science-grounded truths about soul (d) and development of faith in Dev Atma as the one and only true worshipful being. It is clear that Dev Samaj is not just a reformatory movement. Again it is not a variation, or reinterpretation or deepening of the theology and idealism of Vedas and the Upanishads or other traditional religions. It is a religion without a pioneer or predecessor. It is entirely unique in the originality of its teaching, the character of its founder, the structure of its constitution and the nature of its achievements.

**THE CHET RAMIS**  
**J.N. FARQUHAR<sup>1</sup>**

In a village in the Lahore district of the Punjab, Chet Ram was born about 1835<sup>2</sup>. The family were Vishnuites of sect, and belonged to a class of shop-keepers and money-lenders. Chet Ram was uneducated, and almost illiterate. He could keep his shop accounts but that was all. He spent some two years in China, from about 1858, to 1860, as a camp-follower in the second Chinese war. When he returned he settled down in his father-in-law's village Buchhoke, and kept a shop and sold opium and liquor.

To this shop there came from time to time a Muhammadan ascetic of the Chisti order, named Syed Mahbub Shah. He was given to drink, and was often seen in the village in a dull intoxicated condition. Clearly, the man's teaching was eclectic; for he gathered Hindu as well as Muhammadan disciples, and he was accustomed to speak about Christ. Up to this time Chet Ram was in idolater. Then, probably when he was about twenty-seven years of age, he became fascinated by Mahbub. He became his disciple, and hence-forward followed him everywhere, and served him with the utmost faithfulness. We have no record of what Mahbub taught him; but it seems clear that he led him to reverence Christ and the Bible.

Mahbub died when Chet Ram had been his disciple for some three or four years, probably about 1865 or 1867. He was buried at Buchhoke; and, for three years, Chet Ram haunted the tomb, sleeping on it every night, or actually inside it, as tradition now goes. Then one night he had a vision of Jesus Christ, and received a command from him to build a church on that very spot and to place a Bible therein. A Simple Panjabi poem, ascribed to Chet Ram, describes the vision. We quote a few of the stanzas of a translation made by the Rev. G.L. Thakur Dass of Lahore:

1. Upon the grave of Master Mahbub Shah  
Slept Sain Chet Ram.
2. O dear (*reader*) it was midnight,  
Full moon, stars were as hanging lamps:
3. Unique was that night, surpassing the *Shab qadr*;  
Rays were falling from the full moon.
4. There appeared a man  
Whose description is without bounds;
5. A man came in a glorious form  
Showing the face or mercy;
6. His countenance beautiful as the full moon,  
No man could look at that beauty;
7. Glorious form, tall in stature and erect,  
Appeared as if a clear mystery of the Deity.
8. Sweet was his speech, and simple his face.  
Appearing entirely as the image of God.
9. Such a glory was never seen before.  
The coming of the Lord Himself was recognized in it.
10. Afterwards I began to think,  
What was all this which Omnipotence did?
11. Then my soul realized



That Jesus came to give salvation.<sup>3</sup>

The date of the vision must have been somewhere between 1868 and 1870. From that time Chet Ram became, in his own way, a follower of Christ. He built a small church and placed a Bible in it, and began to gather disciples “in the name of Christ.” He succeeded in inducing a number of men and women, both Hindu and Muhammadan, to attach themselves to him. He lived a wandering life, moving about the country with a number of his followers, everywhere proclaiming Jesus as Lord, and suffering much persecution from both Hindus and Muhammadans. He sought the friendship of Christian and missionaries in a general way, but did not join the Christian church. One Sunday in 1887, Chet Ram and his followers came to the American Mission Compound in Lahore; and both the Rev. C.W. Forman and the Rev. C.B. Newton give accounts of the appearance and the behaviour of the leader and his disciples. Mr. Newton went with them to Buchhoke, and saw the church. We have also a report from a missionary in Ludhiana of the year 1888.

Chet Ram died at Buchhoke in 1894 and was cremated; and his bones were buried beside his master’s.

Of Chet Ram’s character Mr. Newton gives us a very pleasing picture, though it is clear that he had but little knowledge of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

“During my stay, I had an opportunity of observing Chet Ram’s conduct and character; and certainly the case is remarkable one, though the good in him is so obscured by superstition and ignorance that one can scarcely call his case a very hopeful one. He manifests on all occasions a strong feeling of love and reverence for Christ, and undergoes persecution and contumely for His name. His treatment of others is marked by a spirit of rare kindness and generosity. One day a *faqir*, a total stranger, from some distant place, came to the *takya*, and told a story of his sufferings, having been robbed of some article of clothing. Chet Ram at once pulled off his own principal garment, and gave it to him. He never refuses appeals of this kind.”

He was no real student of the Bible. He was ignorant and had no desire to read. Sometimes his talk was quite incoherent.

Chet Ram’s daughter was appointed his successor and the head of his sect, while the leader was alive. She is unmarried woman, and is pledged to lifelong celibacy. She lives at the headquarters of the sect, which are now in Lahore.

Just outside the Taxali Gate, Lahore, and at distance of only two or three hundred feet from the Royal Mosque is a small garden thickly planted with trees and flowers and training vines and containing a tiny square building and several *faqirs*’ huts. The square building has one room, perhaps fourteen feet by ten and contains certain relics of Chet Ram such as his bed and his Bible. In front of the building is a pole surmounted by a cross. Such are the monastic headquarters of the Chet Rami Sect in Lahore.<sup>5</sup>

The only other leader whose name is known is one Munshi Nathu, who has been called the theologian of the sect. He has interpolated large pieces into Chet Ram’s poem.

The creed of the sect is quite short. It is engraved on a tablet over the door of Chet Ram’s cell at headquarters. The translation is as follows:

Help, O Jesus, Son of Mary, Holy Spirit, Lord God Shepherd. Read the Bible and the Gospels for salvation. Signed by Chet Ram and the followers.<sup>6</sup>

In this we note the recognition of the Trinity, the duty of reading the Bible and the belief that salvation is made known in the Gospels.

The sect teaches another doctrine of the Trinity besides that contained in the above creed. They believe in the existence of Allah the Creator, Paramesvara the Preserver, and Khuda the Destroyer; and they use this Trinity to set forth the supremacy of Jesus. Allah represents Muhammadanism. Paramesvara Hinduism, and Khuda, who is the greatest of the three, is Jesus. Jesus is the true God. He is the giver of all gifts. All the Muhammadan prophets and saints and the Hindu gods and incarnations were sent by Jesus. He is the supreme ruler over all. He is the Son of God. The Father and the son are of one nature.

No that Chet Ram is dead, his followers give him a very exalted place. They say he is not dead, but is present now and works in the hearts of his followers. As Hindus recognize their guru to be God, they consider Chet Ram to be Christ Himself. They praise Chet Ram as much as they praise Christ. They are accustomed to say:

There is God, if Chet Ram says so;  
There is no God, if Chet Ram says no.

After his cremation, his ashes were mixed with water and eagerly swallowed by his disciples. It is their veneration for their Teacher which keeps them from joining the Christian Church.

The followers of Chet Ram are either householders or monks. When a man joins the community, there is ceremony of baptism. When a birth takes place, the creed is recited in the ears of the child, and also the names of the twelve Apostles. When a member wants to become a Chet Ram monk, he tears off his clothes, casts dust upon his head and thus becomes a monk. This is known as Earth-baptism. The monks get their living by begging; and they are the only clergy of the sect. It is their business to preach the Gospel of Chet Ram. Like most modern Indian ascetics, they are addicted to the use of intoxicating drugs, such as bhang, charas, opium.

As to the Chet Rami worship Dr. Griswold writes:<sup>6</sup>

There does not seem to be any fixed form of worship among the Chet Ramis. One *oldfaqir* declared that for the enlightened there is no need of religious worship. 'We have received,' said he, 'worship is for those who have not received.' I invited Munshi Nathi to attend our Church services in Lahore. He proceeded to tell me that all such worship is man-made worship. I have spent many hours at the Chet Rami *Khanqah* in Lahore, conversing with Munshi Nathu. He said to me on one occasion, 'This conversation of ours is worship; no other worship is needed.' All Chet Ramis are supposed to own a Bible, and the few who can read doubtless read it. Ghulam Muhammad one day said to me: 'I read the Bible every day and especially on the Sabbath. I was just reading the first chapter of John's Gospel, when you arrived.' The Chet Rami creed is repeated as an act of worship, and the Hymn of Chet Ram is chanted. There are some forms of worship which show decidedly the influence of Hinduism and Mohammadanism. At the *Khanqah* in Lahore are preserved with great care certain relics of Chet Ram. At evening lighted lamps are placed before the Cross and the Bible.

On one occasion I noticed the evening worship of two Chet Rami women. They came and bowed themselves to the ground first before the cross and then before the Bible, and so went their way. A considerable use is made of amulets. Charms are made and inscribed with the Chet Rami Creed and with the names of the Twelve Apostles and hung about the neck.

Most of the members of the sect are poor, illiterate people. They are a small body, probably less than a thousand in number. There is a good deal of brotherly feeling amongst them. Yet caste remains among them, and Hindu converts do not mix with Muhammadan converts. The duty of philanthropy, and of the endurance of persecution, has been carefully taught them but, apart from that, there does not seem to be much emphasis on morality. They frequently carry a long rod surmounted by a cross. On the horizontal bar of the cross there is usually inscribed the creed of the sect.

Footnotes:

1. *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London, 1924.
2. All my information about this sect is derived from Dr. Griswold's pamphlet, *The Chet Rami Sect*, Cawnpore, Christ Church Mission Press, 1904. The references are to its pages.
3. Pp. 4-6.
4. P. 9.
5. P. 1.
6. P. 13.
7. Pp. 21-2.

## THE AHMADIYAH MOVEMENT WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH<sup>1</sup>

The most important fact about the Ahmadiyah Movement in Indian Islam is that the Ahmadiyah Movement, (though important in itself) is not important in Indian Islam. It has become important in the West, partly because of its extensive and able missionary enterprise, and partly because Christian missionaries in India have devoted much attention to it and to reporting its activities. A great deal has already been written describing the movement and we, therefore, need only make a few observations on its sociological significance.

The Ahmadiyah Movement arose towards the end of the nineteenth century, amidst the turmoil of the downfall of the old Islamic society and the infiltration of the new culture, with its new attitudes, its Christian missionary onslaught, and the new Aligarh Islam. It arose as a protest against Christianity and the success of Christian proselytisation; a protest also against Sir Sayyid Ahmad's rationalism and Westernisation; and at the same time as a protest against the decadence of the prevailing Islam. It combined a purifying spirit of orthodox reform, a tinge of the new liberalism, a mystic irrationalism, and the authoritarianism of a new revelation. It appealed, therefore, to a group who were somewhat affected by the new conditions, but did not wish to make the complete break of becoming Christians, and were not sufficiently affected by those conditions to rely upon their own new position and to take responsibility themselves for Islamic modernism. The Ahmadiyah supplied such persons with a reform of the more obvious superstitions and corruptions; with a little liberalism, with an emotional security against Christianity; and underlying all, the authoritarianism of an accepted dogmatic infallibility, plus the enthusiasm and support of a small and self-conscious group.

The 'prophet' of the movement was the pious Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908), born in a minor landowning family in Qadian, a small town in the Punjab. As a youth he developed into a rapt religious recluse, given to hearing voices. He felt acutely the degradation into which Islam had fallen; and as he pondered religious questions he felt more and more called to purify Islam. He became widely known for his piety, and presently for his theological teachings; he was accepted by many, including orthodox religious, as a great Muslim reformer. Suddenly, in 1889, his popularity gave place to extreme denunciation, when he announced that he had received a revelation authorizing him to receive men's allegiance as the promised Messiah and *Imam Mahdi*; that is Jesus returned to earth and the apocalyptic saviour who Muslim tradition has held will appear at the last day. The general Muslim community, and particularly the divines, outraged by this blasphemy, attacked him relentlessly. He persisted in his claims, undaunted, and gradually in succeeding years augmented them; and a small but growing group of disciples acknowledged his prophethood and adopted the new Islam. Despite intense persecution, the community grew, in numbers and in faith.

As the movement developed within the developing historical process, a time came when the liberal element had advanced sufficiently that it could and must dispense with the other, supporting elements, which it had outgrown. The liberalism and the mystic authoritarianism consequently disentangled themselves, and the movement split. One section, comprising the middle-class members, set up its headquarters in a city (Lahore), and chose for leader an intellectual, slightly nationalist. English-educated lawyer, one Muhammad Ali. This group (incomparably the smaller now) has grown increasingly liberal, and has approached nearer and nearer to ordinary liberal Islam. It belittles its connection with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, whose prophethood in a literal sense it

explicitly repudiates; and it has been gradually obliterating the distinction between itself and the general middle-class Muslim community. That community also has begun to forget that distinction, and to look upon the Lahore Ahmadiyah as simply an energetic and worthy Muslim missionary society. This Lahore section has, in fact, played a large part in the dissemination of Islamic liberal ideas. It has been politically passive.

The other section of the movement, when the split came, stayed in the village (Qadian), and chose for leader a man whose claim was his descent from the 'Messiah' Ahmad. It still has a smattering of liberalism in its ideas, and a sprinkling of middle-class followers in its membership. But the general atmosphere is traditional. For instance, the movement strictly enforces *pardah* and encourages polygamy, and has an ascetic morality that disapproves of cinemas. On modern social questions, the group has little opinion, mostly, it is not conscious of them. The problems of to-day's world which it cannot ignore, because they press on even this small community, it does not bother about on a large scale; because on a small scale it solves them. For instance, instead of pondering world unemployment or class antagonisms, it sees to it that all its own members have jobs, and collects the canonical Muslim poor rate from its rich for its poor. Thus Ahmadis come nearer to living the good life than do most of their neighbours; while their ideas on the subject are a century out of date. In fact, intellectually the movement is modern only in the sense of being recent. It is conservative, but it is not advanced enough to be termed reactionary. (We must note that its propaganda in Europe and America omits much of the backwardness which is evident at home, and includes a larger share of liberal ideology.) There is nothing in the Qadian Ahmadiyah that is not in orthodox Islam, except, its novelty, and the consequent enthusiasm; its authoritarianism, with a *khatifah* who can relieve his followers of the moral responsibility of deciding even modern questions; and finally, and most important, its cohesion - the fellowship and solidarity of a small and active community.

The community is certainly active, and it flourishes as the green bay tree. It has an exceedingly strong and closely-knit organization. It meets annually in a large gathering. It imposes large taxes on its members. It has its own schools; even its own courts, for all disputes between members which the Government of India itself does not insist upon trying; etc. It claims 100 percent male literacy, 75 percent female (in *pardah* schools). If half a village somewhere is Ahmadi, that half is apt to be cleaner than the other half. There is an extreme corporate enthusiasm; the *Qadiyanis* devote themselves cheerfully to the service of their community, and feel that community also is serving and supporting them. And they feel that they are taking part in a glorious creative task. Qadian, the headquarters of the movement, once a village, is now a thriving town undergoing a minor capitalist 'boom'. Landowners and others with private incomes, and retired professional men, have moved to Qadian to live; other enterprising members have come there to set up businesses, which have prospered. The organisation itself owns and operates industries in Qadian, as well as encouraging its well-to-do members to do likewise; so that there is also a growing demand for labour. Further it owns land in Sind, to which it sends needy peasant members. It tries, with fair success, to find jobs for its unemployed; and runs a poor house in Qadian for its unemployables.

The *Qadiyanis*, then, differ from the modern Muslims in that they have a positive and concrete programme, and are busy carrying it into effect. In addition to admiring the first age of Islam, they can feel that they are in actual fact working to reproduce it. They have an enterprise before them which demands their energies, satisfies their needs, and awakens their enthusiasm. In spite of their antiquated social theories, they are forward-looking in chronological sense; they can see the good old days being resuscitated before their eyes in Qadian. Further, they are ardently

missionary. The material counterpart of this ideal, is as we have seen, the industrialization of their small, cohesive, and fairly wealthy community, undergoing a private phase of capitalist expansion.

Politically, the Qadian Ahmadiyah has been rigidly 'non-partisan'; It insists upon supporting whatever government is in power, providing it is allowed freedom to preach. Economically, it is very decidedly in support of the rights of private property; and its avowed policy is to preach acquiescence in the *status quo*.

From time to time a quarrel flares up between the Muslims and the Ahmadiyah. The Movement is disliked; primarily because of its exclusiveness; its members refuse to pray in a non-Ahmadi mosque, to attend a non-Ahmadi funeral, to take part in non-Ahmadi political aspirations. The counter-part of their internal cohesion and extreme self-consciousness as a community is their deliberately cutting themselves off from the general Indian or Muslim community and its problems. It is this social aloofness rather than their theology (which is no more heretical than the respected Agha Khan's) that has occasioned the bitter antagonism between the Muslims and themselves.

Generally, however, the Muslims of India are becoming less conscious of the Ahmadiyah Movement. They who once would kill it in ruthless furore now almost ignore it; especially as they have the Hindu community as a more absorbing antagonist. As we said at the beginning, the Ahmadiyah is not very important in Indian Islam. We are content to leave undecided the question of whether or not it is part of Islam, whether or not Ahmadis should be called Muslims. Theoretically, the question is of no significance; it is purely a matter of terminology. From the practical point of view, the question is in fact undecided; it is not yet known whether or not in a crisis the Ahmadis would act with the general Muslim community - not even whether that community itself would act conceitedly.

Footnotes:

1. *Modern Islam in India*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1946, pp. 298-302.

## THE FIRST POPULAR MOVEMENT IN THE PANJAB<sup>1</sup>

### PROF. GURMUKH NIHAL SINGH

The Punjab was the last portion of the country to come under British rule and the National Movement also came to the Punjab very late. Its effective beginnings may be dated from 1907 - the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the First War of Indian Independence, as the 1857 rising has been called by Shri V. D. Savarkar.

The first popular movement in the Punjab was in connection with the Land Colonization Bill, 1907. The national movement, particularly the turn it took from 1905, had stirred the minds of the educated classes in the Punjab. The teachings of Swami Dayanand had helped to create a spirit of independence and *Swadeshi* among the Hindu young men; and the happenings in Bengal could not but influence them. Vigorous national propaganda was being carried on in the Indian Press and some of the papers went beyond constitutional limits. Their editors and printers were prosecuted and punished. But no action was taken against the Anglo-Indian papers which were preaching racial hatred and enmity. *The Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore* was the worst offender. It carried on a systematic campaign against the educated classes by calling them all sort of names and by spreading false alarms of revolt. It gave out that the 50th Anniversary of the Mutiny (May 10, 1907) would be marked by another big rising against the British. This was taken seriously and preparations were made in several Punjab towns for the protection of British lives by making arrangements for the withdrawing of British residents into the forts. Writes Mr. Nevinston – “But in spite of all that prophecy could do, no outbreak occurred.”

However, the vigorous anti-Indian propaganda of the Anglo-Indian press and the surge of the nationalist movement in Bengal with the prevalence of natural calamities like the plague and the famine and the adoption of unwise agrarian measures by the Government had created a very tense situation in the Punjab during 1907-08. In April, 1907, the public opinion in Lahore was running very high owing to the prosecution of two Indian papers *India and the Punjabee*. The editor and proprietor of *India* was sentenced to five years imprisonment and the printer to two years “for publishing a letter from America containing a seditious appeal to the native troops.” The *Punjabee* was prosecuted for its comments on a *Begar* Case in which two villagers, who were forced to work for an official, were said to have died as a result of forced labour. The proprietor was finally sentenced (on appeal) to a fine of Rs. 1,000/- and an imprisonment of six months and the editor to a fine of Rs. 200/- and an imprisonment of six months. On the 16<sup>th</sup> April, 1907, the final judgement was delivered by the Lahore High Court in the *Punjabee* case. As soon as the people heard of it they gathered in large numbers and they met the prisoners as they were being taken to jail. There was great enthusiasm and commotion leading to a riot.

However, the troubles in the Punjab were largely agrarian in their origin. It is admitted by the biographer of Lord Minto that the disturbances were largely due “to the unwise handling by the Local Government of the situation in the Canal Colonies. Land revenue was considerably increased; the irrigation rates, especially on the Bari-Doab Canal were raised and above all the Government attempted to go back on their word in connection with the possession of reclaimed lands in the Chenab Colony. A Colonisation Bill was rushed through the Punjab Legislative Council altering the agreements made under the Act of 1893. There was strong agitation against these measures. The leaders of the movement were Mr. Ajit Singh and Syed Hyder Riza. They had formed an ‘Indian Patriots Association’ for the purpose. Various meetings were held all over the province, especially in

the places affected. A meeting was held at Lyallpur on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1907, where Lala Lajpat Rai had been invited to speak. He criticised the Government measures which he held were responsible for the increasing discontent. Mr. Ajit Singh also spoke at the meeting, this coincidence of both of them speaking at the same meeting was perhaps responsible for the later deportation of the two gentlemen together - Lala Lajpat Rai and Mr. Ajit Singh - under the old musty Regulation of 1818.

The increase in the land-revenue was specially great in the Rawalpindi district. Two meetings were held in April, 1907, at Rawalpindi to protest against the heavy increase. At the second meeting held on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, Mr. Ajit Singh was the chief speaker. The President, Lala Hans Raj, stopped Mr. Ajit Singh when his speech became really violent; but a few days after, a notice was served on the President and two other respectable pleaders, Lala Amolak Ram and Lala Gurdas Ram, who were also connected with the meeting of April 21st, requiring them to attend on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 11.00 a.m. at the public enquiry to be held for the purpose of prosecuting them under Sections 124-A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code. The three lawyers-and also Lala Lajpat Rai, who had reached Rawalpindi to render what help he could to his lawyer friends - considered the notice illegal and decided not to put in personal appearance. They, however, authorised two young barristers, Mr. Aziz Ahmad and Mr. Bodh Raj, to watch the proceedings on their behalf. A large crowd gathered near the Court of the District Magistrate on the morning of 2<sup>nd</sup> May. It was swelled by a large number of workmen who had struck work that morning at the Government Arsenal, the Railway Workshop and the private workshop of R.B. Sardar Boota Singh. And as *the* hour passed eleven and the District Magistrate did not arrive, the crowd became very restive. At last he reached at 12.30 but instead of proceeding with the public enquiry postponed it till further notice -it appears owing to orders from the Punjab Government. When the crowd learnt of the postponement, it lost its temper and “instead of dispersing, swept down a main road, destroyed and burnt some furniture from a mission house and church, and damaged some gardens and houses of Europeans together with a Hindu workshop, where the men were on strike. The police did not appear, but troops patrolled the town later.”

For this riot six prominent lawyers, including the three who were connected with the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> April, and sixty other persons were arrested. All the six lawyers were acquitted on October 1<sup>st</sup> after being kept in jail in great discomfort during the hottest months in the year, ‘the Magistrate declaring the evidence was fabricated.’ Out of the remaining accused five persons were sentenced, three to seven years’ imprisonment, for riot and arson.

The situation in the Punjab later improved mainly owing to the vetoing of the Colonization Bill by the Viceroy, Lord Minto, who considered it ‘an unjust Bill’. He wrote to Mr. Morley in this connection: “I hate the argument that to refuse to sanction what we know to be wrong is a surrender to agitation and an indication of weakness. It is far weaker, to my mind, to persist in a wrong course for fear of being thought weak.” Writes Lord Minto’s biographer: “So he disallowed the Bill, with the most fortunate consequences.”

Footnotes:

1. Originally written for the *Punjab, 1849-1960 (Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth)*, 1962.



## BOOK REVIEWS

SOME OBSERVATIONS IN MR. Z. FARUKI'S CHAPTER X ON THE SIKHS in his 'AURANGZEB AND HIS TIMES', Delhi, 1972.

Zaheeruddin Faruki's *Aurangzeb and His Times* was first published in 1935 by Messrs D.B. Taraporewala Sons and Co., Bombay. A reprint of it was issued at Delhi in 1972. In it the author has acted more as a defence advocate of the Great Mughals than as a writer of objective history. His chapter on *The Sikhs*, pp. 247-259, is particularly objectionable and was the subject of serious criticism in the press.

In his overflowing enthusiasm to defend the policies of Emperor Aurangzeb and his predecessors, the author has not unoften sacrificed historical truths and has, unwittingly or otherwise, thrown some uncalled for aspersions on the Sikhs and their Gurus.

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There is nothing to substantiate that Guru Nanak "wrote the sacred thread *ẓunnar* round his neck." His biographies are all definite on the point that he refused to put on the thread when the family priest had come to his father's house for the purpose. Not only this. In his hymns in the *Asā-dī-Vār*, the Guru has also in unambiguous language declared 'the thread' to be futile and meaningless (*Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 471,491). Evidently the author of the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* has misunderstood his informant who, in turn, seems to have confused it with the black woollen string, known as *Sebli*, which a class of saints wear in India, and which is said to have been worn by Guru Nanak also.

Guru Nanak died in 1539 and not in 1538, and the place of his death, Kartarpur, lies in the Rechna *Doab* on the western bank of Ravi in Pakistan and *not in Jalandhar Doab*.

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In the case of Guru Arjun, the author has ignored the direct and first-hand evidence of Emperor Jahangir who says on page 35 of his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, that on account of the Guru's increasing influence among 'simple-minded Hindus and foolish and stupid Muslims' who 'called him *Guru*,' "I have been thinking for a long time that either I should put an end to this false business or he should be brought into the fold of Islam." As soon as the Emperor heard of his rebellious son Khusrau's meeting with the Guru, the Emperor says; "I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, and having handed over his houses, dwelling places and children to Murtaza Khan and having confiscated his property, *I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures - Amar kardam kih ū-rā bāẓir sākhtand wa masākin o manāẓil o farẓandān-i-ū rā ba-Murtāẓa Khān ināyat namudam wa asbāb-o-amwāl-i-ū rā ba-qaid-i-ẓabt dar āwaurdah farmūdām kih ū rā ba-sayāsāt o ba-yasā rasānand.*"

Emperor Jahangir's own words are so clear: about the Guru's death with tortures under royal orders that they call for no comments. As such, it is unhistorical and wrong to attribute other causes to the martyrdom of Guru Arjun.

The Emperor also says that *he had heard* about the Guru's having put saffron mark in the forehead of the rebel prince. But this is wrong on the very face of it. It was not the practice with

the Sikh Gurus to anoint anyone. Even the Guru himself was not anointed on the occasion of his accession by the preceding Guru, but by a Sikh. Similarly it is incorrect to say that ‘Guru Arjan had blessed the standard of Khusrav and prayed for his victory.’

It is equally wrong to say that Guru Hargobind “was employed by Jahangir” or that “After Jahangir’s death, he took service under Shahjahan.” There is not a word in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, the *Shahjahan-Namah* or in the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* or in any other contemporary or semi-contemporary work to support it. The author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* in one place uses the words *paivastah az rikab and dar bandgi* in connection with Jahangir and Shahjahan, but they can be no stretch of imagination be translated as ‘employment’ or ‘service’ in the light of objective history. They are used only metaphorically as was the practice in the days of the Great Mughals.

The charge of “appropriating the pay of his soldiers” against Guru Hargobind is baseless and is not supported by any reliable historical evidence. The *Dabistan*, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, etc. are all silent about it.

The author has unnecessarily given credence to the stories cooked up by some later writers who have introduced the name of one Chandu Shah of Lahore, also called Duni Chand by some. He has accepted this type of spurious material, evidently, with a view to shifting the responsibility of Guru Arjun’s martyrdom to persons other than Emperor Jahangir. But the Emperor himself owns the responsibility in his autobiography. The author’s effort, therefore, is but a deliberate and calculated falsification of history - a thing highly reprehensible and objectionable.

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To say that Ram Rai was the son of a hand-maiden and was therefore not chosen to succeed his father, is a mutilation of history, pure and simple. In fact. Ram Rai, when sent to Emperor Aurangzeb, felt overawed in the presence of the Great Mughal and had altered a line of a hymn of Guru Nanak to gratify the Emperor and had thus lost the confidence of his father. Ram Rai’s failure to come up to the standard required for succession to Guruship was the only cause of his being passed over (Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, pp. iv, 309-10). And, this was not the first and the only case of this type. The author, evidently, has not studied the Sikh traditions closely. The Guruship was not anyone’s family inheritance passing from father to son as a primogenitary right. It always went to the fittest person selected by the reigning Guru. Except in the case of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh, who were the only sons of Guru Arjan and Tegh Bahadur respectively, the Guruship in no case went to the eldest son. In the first three cases, no member of any of the Guru’s family was selected for the high office.

It is really strange that for the author of the *Aurangzeb and His Times*, the District Gazetteer of Dehradun is more reliable and authentic than Macauliffe’s *Sikh Religion*, based on Sikh historical literature, of which he is terribly shy. He has chosen to call Macauliffe’s reason ‘fantastic’, evidently because it does not fit in with his line of thinking and preconceived notions (See pp. 250-51). He brushes aside the Sikh sources as ‘not very reliable’, and for this he has sought the support of Dr. Ernest Trumpp who is well known for his prejudices against the Sikhs and Sikhism and whose translation of the Sikh scripture, the *Adi-Granth* (London, 1877), was declared by knowledgeable scholars, both of east and west, to be unreliable and unacceptable, being much against the spirit of the original which he was not able to enter into for want of proper grounding in the study of the Panjabi language and literature.

Guru Tegh Bahadur had gone to the eastern province in keeping with the practice of the previous Gurus, who had been visiting various places either to establish new Sikh centres or to pay visits to the old Sikh congregations. Guru Nanak had travelled throughout the length and breadth of India and to Arabia in the west. Guru Hargobind had visited the Sikh *Sangats* in the east as far as Nanakmata in the district of Pilibhit and had strengthened the Sikh centre there.

Guru Tegh Bahadur did not accompany Raja Ram Singh from Delhi to Assam. According to the *Maāsir-i-Ālamgīrī*, Ram Singh received the Emperor's order on December 21, 1667, to proceed to Assam and he arrived at Rangamati in February 1669 (Gate, *History of Assam*, 148).

Guru Tegh Bahadur was then already there, having arrived in 1666 at Patna in Behar where his son Gobind Singh was born on December 22, 1666. This means that the Guru had come to Bengal and Assam more than two years before the arrival of Raja Ram Singh. In one of his letters to the Sikhs of Patna, the Guru says that he had moved ahead in the company of 'Raja-ji' and had left his family at Patna. In this letter the name of 'Raja-ji' is not mentioned and it seems to have been written before the birth of his son Gobind Singh (*Hukam-Nama* No. 13, p. 87). Mr. G. B. Singh in his *Sikh Relics in East Bengal* thinks that this Raja-ji in all probability was Raja Subal Singh Sasodia (*Dacca Review*, vol. V October-November, 1915, pp. 224-32; *the Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. I, April 1967, p. 77).

Guru Tegh Bahadur seems to have accompanied Raja Ram Singh for some time in Assam only in 1669, when the Guru had been in these provinces for some three years, and not *to* Assam from Delhi.

The question of Guru's 'joining' the Mughal army, -if, by 'joining' the author means his joining it as an officer or a soldier -does not arise, as he is nowhere mentioned as taking part in any of the Mughal expeditions in Bengal or Assam. Evidently, the author here wishes to reduce Guru Tegh Bahadur to the position of a servant of the Mughal government. This is unhistorical and it undoubtedly injures the feelings of the Sikh community.

Using the *Siyar-ul-Mutākherīn* (Briggs translation, pp. 74,75), the author has accused Guru Tegh Bahadur of violent depredations, plunder, levying contributions, etc., etc., in collaboration with Hafiz Adam. The *Siyar-ul-Mutākherīn* of Ghulam Hussain Khan is highly prejudiced against the Sikhs. It was written in the early eighties of the eighteenth century at a time when the Sikhs had liberated the Panjab from under the Mughals and had pushed out the Afghans. This had, not unnaturally, created prejudices in the minds of the Muslims of India against the Sikhs and had greatly influenced the writings of Muslim scholars about them. The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutākherīn* had, apparently, an extra dose of these prejudices and he has readily availed himself of such anti-Sikh material in his chapter on the Sikhs as has levelled wrongful charges against them and their Gurus.

The travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Malwa territory with a large number of devotees occasionally coming either to welcome him to their places or to see him off on his departure, or accompanying him from place to place, and the offerings made by the devotees to the Guru as their religious preceptor, have been misinterpreted or misrepresented as depredatory expeditions and levying of contributions. Otherwise, there is nothing extra-ordinary in this. The Guru's visits to various Sikh congregational centres and the making of offerings of money and other presents to him by his devotees on such occasions was the usual practice in the Gurus' days. And it is still followed

by the leaders of some of the modern religious movements. To misinterpret them as any thing else is criminal injustice to history.

The forcible conversion of the Pandits of Kashmir to Islam during the governorship of Iftikhar Khan (1672-75) - a governor of Aurangzeb - is borne out by P.N.K. Bamzai in his *A History of Kashmir* (pp. 371,454-55) and other works.

Irvine's *Later Mughals*, occasionally quoted, is based mostly on Persian works of Muslim writers of the eighteenth century which are not free from pro-Muslim and anti-Sikh prejudices as mentioned earlier. The reports made to Emperor Aurangzeb against Guru Tegh Bahadur were evidently misrepresentations of the Guru's activities and of those of his devotees. The Emperor's orders for his arrest, imprisonment and execution, therefore, were nothing but miscarriage of justice and indefensible tyranny.

The whole story of depredations, levy of contributions, plunder, etc., falls down to the ground as baseless and imaginary when Guru Tegh Bahadur's alleged collaboration with Hafiz Adam is subjected to historical scrutiny. The fact is that Hafiz Adam was not then in the land of living and had died at Madina in Shawwal 1053 al-Hijri, December 1643, fifteen years before the accession of Emperor Aurangzeb to power in 1658 and twenty-three years before Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeded to Guruship in 1665. Hafiz Adam was in fact a contemporary of the fifth and sixth Gurus (1581-1644) and not of the seventh and eighth Gurus' much less of the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur with whom he is said to have collaborated in objectionable 'offences against the State' - see Nazir Ahmad Deobandi, *Tazkirat-ul-Abidin*, pp. 124-5; Sayyad Abdul Haye Hasani *Nazhat-ul-Khwatir*, V, 1-2; Ghulam Nabi, *Mirat-ul-Qaunain*, p. 417; Mirza Muhammad Akhtar, *Tazkirah-i-Auliya-i-Hind-o-Pakistan*, p. 401.

This also very adversely reflects on the authenticity of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakberin* as a book of reliable history, particularly with reference to the Sikhs. The position is worsened by its translators who have not unoften interpolated their own meanings through wrong translations. To quote only one example. The words in the Siyar about Guru Tegh Bahadur are that having collected many followers, *Sahib-i-iqtidar gasht* (page 401, lines 20-21), that is, he became master of authority or dignity. John Briggs, however, has translated it as: "he aspired to sovereignty" (page 74, lines 32-33). Having used this translation of John Briggs, the author of the *Aurangzeb and His Times* he conveyed wrong impression to his readers about the Guru and has done him great injustice, in addition to distortion of history.

It is the grossest misrepresentation of historical facts to say that "the history of the Sikhs after the death of Tegh Bahadur. . . . becomes the history of a people commencing their military career to wreak their vengeance on the Muslims," or that "the Sikhs were trained in the use of arms, and were taught to devote themselves to wage war against the Muslims" (page 255). There is nothing in the writing of Guru Gobind Singh to substantiate this statement. In fact, he says:

Recognize all mankind as one, whether  
Hindus or Muslims, Rafizis or Imamshafis.  
The same Lord is *Kartā*, *Karām*, *Razīq* and *Rahim*  
(the names given to him by Hindus and Muslims)  
Recognize no distinction between them.  
The Hindu monastery and Muslim mosque.

The Hindu worship and Muslim prayer, are all same.

Men are all one. . . .

The Bengalis of Banga (desh), the Franks of the West, . . . .

The Ruhelas of Roh, . . . . the Arabs, . . . . the Persians, . . . . the Qandaharis, etc. , are all worshippers of the same Lord.

To say that a man of such cosmopolitan views and a teacher of the Unity and Uniqueness of God and of the Oneness of mankind, as Guru Gobind Singh was, had taught and trained his disciples “to wage war against the Muslims” is to misread and misinterpret history. As to the mission of his life, the Guru says:

For this purpose was I born,  
Understand all ye pious people,  
To uphold righteousness,  
To protect those worthy and virtuous;  
To overcome and destroy evil-doers.

From this it is clear that the mission of the Guru’s life was to uphold righteousness and to root out evil, regardless of the creed of the people. He had no prejudice against or in favour of any community. His first battle was fought with the Hindu Rajput Raja Fateh Shah who had come to attack him in the neighbourhood of Bhangani. The Guru tells us in his *Bachittar Natak* that Fateh Shah “fought with me without any case - *loh pāra ham se bin kājā* (viii. 3).

This gives a direct lie to the accusation against Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs. In no case did the Guru or his Sikhs take the initiative in leading attacks against the Muslims. All his battles, both against the Hindu hill chiefs and the Mughal forces, were defensive (See the Guru’s *Bachittar Natak*: Sainapati’s *Sri GurSabha*; Sundar Singh, *The Battle of Guru Gobind Singh*, etc. etc.)

Not only this. His relations with the Muslims as such very cordial indeed and he had amongst them some of his very good friends. History bears witness to this. A renowned Muslim *Peer* Saiyad Badar-ud-Din Shah of Sadhaura, popularly known as Buddhu Shah, and his sons and followers actually fought on his side in the battle of Bhangani (See Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, V. 18, 37, 45; Giani Abadullah, *Sikh Guru Sahiban aur Musalman*, 225-32; etc. etc.)

The story of the capture of Guru Gobind Singh after his escape from Chamkaur by Nabhi Khan and the former’s appeal to him for mercy is all a fib of the writer’s imagination. Nabi Khan and his brother Ghani Khan were the old friends of the Guru and they had helped him in time of need. In recognition of this, the Guru had given to them a *Hukam-Nāmāh* which is still in the possession of their descendants. This is prominently recorded in almost all the books on the life of the Guru (Also see Giani Abadullah. *Ibid*, 231-6).

The *Zafarnāmāh*, as the very name signifies, was not a ‘petition’ to Aurangzeb as suggested. It was, in fact, a letter of complaints addressed to the Emperor telling him that his *Bakhshis* and *Divans* were all liars (*hamāh kizbgo*) and breakers of faith (*paimān-shikam*) and that he could not trust their oaths on the Holy Quran. This *Zafarnāmāh*, the Guru had written to the Emperor in reply to his written and verbal messages which had been received by him through the Emperor’s officials - *navishtab raseed-o-biguftā zābān* - and had told him therein that he could not trust the ‘present’ oath - *Marā itibāre bar in qasm neest* - as well, in the light of his past bitter experience. He was, however

prepared to see him in the Deccan for personal negotiations, if a *Farman* were sent to him direct by the Emperor.

On receipt of this letter, Aurangzeb, as an intelligent ruler, could see the truth in the Guru's words and feel the weight in his arguments. He dispatched a mace-bearer, Muhammad Beg, and a *Mansabdār*, Sheikh Yar Muhammad, with a *farman* to his minister Muhammad Amin Khan at Delhi with instructions to conciliate and sooth the Guru - *mustamāl gardānidāh* - and to arrange for his journey to the Deccan where the Emperor was then encamped (Inayatullah Khan, *Abkām-i-Ālamgiri*). In the meantime, the Guru had already left for the Deccan via Rajputana, to see the Emperor, and was in the neighbourhood of Baghaur that he received the news of his death at Ahmadnagar on February 20, 1707. The Guru then decided to return to the Punjab. History was thus deprived of the result of the personal talks and negotiations between Emperor Aurangzeb and Guru Gobind Singh.

All this clearly shows the real nature of the Guru's letter. It is couched in a very polite and respectful language. After all, it was a letter addressed to the reigning Emperor. And it was in keeping with the diction of the Persian language wherein the words like *kamtārīn banda* (an insignificant slave, most humble and obedient servant), *fidvī* (devoted servant), *nāchīz* (insignificant, of no consequence), *khāskār* (dustful), *chakar* (servant), etc., etc. are very commonly used by the writer for himself. They are never taken literally. It was just in the same way as in English the highest officer, writing even to an ordinary person, would end his letter with the words "I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant". Similarly, the Guru's formal polite words in the *Zafarnāmāh* - *Shahanshāh rā bandā-o-chakarem* - are not to be taken in their literal meaning to say that "the Guru openly declared himself a *servant* of the Emperor." No honest scholar of Persian would do that.

The *Bhadur Shāh Nāmāh*, the *Tārīkh-i-Bahādur Shāhī*, and the *Akbbārāt-i-Darbār-i-Mullā* occasionally refer to Guru Gobind Singh and to his interview with Emperor Bahadur Shah near Agra on July 23, 1707. There is not a word in them to say that "Guru Gobind Singh was given a *Mansab* by Bahadur Shah and joined the Mughal army." It is, of course, true that friendly relations had developed between the two when they were at Delhi and the Guru had helped the rightful Prince Muazzam (Shah Alam Bahadur Shah) with a detachment of 200/300 spearmen in the battle of Jajau on June 8, 1707, against his usurping younger brother Prince Azam. As an expression of his gratitude. Emperor Bahadur Shah presented to the Guru in a public darbar on July 23, 1707, "a *Khilat* and a jewelled scarf" (*Akbbārāt: Bahādur Shāh Nāmā: Sri Gur Sabbā*, XIV, 1-36). But there is no mention of any *mansab* having been conferred upon him or of his *joining* the Mughal army. It is true that the Guru, at times, accompanied the Emperor towards the Deccan and also occasionally met the Emperor. But on his way he usually visited the Sikh congregations and addressed them. The *Tārīkh-i-Bahādur Shāhī* tells us:

"At the time the army was marching southwards towards Burhanpur, Guru Gobind, one of the grandsons [descendants] of Nanak, had come into these districts *to travel* and *accompanied* the royal camp. He was in the habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics, and all sorts of people." [Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, VII, p. 566].

This speaks for itself and calls for no comments.

In the last paragraph of his chapter (page 259) the author has flung a most undeserved aspersion on the character of the Sikhs and their religion saying: “that by the time of Aurangzeb the Sikhs had not only lost all trace of Guru Nanak’s lofty spiritualism and elevated ideas but had also degenerated into roving bands, the reverse of peaceful.” This was the time of Gurus Har Rai, Har Krishan, Tegh Bahadur and Gobind Singh, and the above observations betray the writer’s ignorance of the history of the Sikhs and Sikhism during this period. Without offering any comments, we would in this case only quote from the well known historical work, the *Khulāsāt-i-Tawārikh* by Sujan Rai Bhandari edited by M. Zafar Hasan (Delhi, 1918). Its author was a contemporary of the last four Gurus and had written his book in the 40<sup>th</sup> years of Emperor Aurangzeb’s reign (1696-97) when, according to the author himself. Guru Gobind Singh had been on the *gaddi* of Guruship for twenty-two years. In Sujan Rai Bhandari’s words (translated into English):

“Most of the disciples and devotees of Baba Nanak are men of real attainments, of God-fearing saintliness, advanced in meditation and of accepted prayer in the Court of me Lord. The worship of these people consists of the study of the hymns of their Guru which they read in soft and sweet singing tones and sing in concert in heart-alluring and charming tunes. Having removed all hatred from their hearts and lifting the curtain of doubt, darkness and narrowness from their minds, they look upon their relatives and others alike; friends and foes are equal to them, and they are very faithful to their friends, and with foes they live without any quarrel with them. The faith that they have in their Guru is very rarely to be found in any other group of people. The service of strangers and travellers in the name of their Guru, which they always keep on repeating, they regard as the greatest devotion. Even if a person were to come at midnight and mention the name of Baba Nanak, however stranger and unknown he may be, even if he were a thief, a robber or an evil-doer, they look upon him as a brother and a friend and serve him to the best of their ability”, April 9, 1973.

GANDA SINGH

*AKALI MORCHLAN DA ITIHAS* (Punjabi) by *Sohan Singh Josh*, Navyug Publishers, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 530, Price Rs. 20/-.

*Akali Morchian Da Itihas* by Sohan Singh Josh is a welcome addition to the very limited literature on the Akali movement. The author, a veteran Akali turned marxist, is both a contemporary and an eye-witness of this important phase of the religio-political life of the Punjab in the early twenties of the twentieth century and had undergone various imprisonments along with other Akali leaders. It is the first bold attempt at presenting to the readers in general and the researchers working on the modern Punjab in particular, a comprehensive account of this much neglected phase of the two-pronged struggle of the Akalis directed against the Mahants on the one front and the British imperialism on the other. On going through the pages of the book one has to agree to a great extent with the author’s claim of using all available material on the topic within the country.

To begin, with the writer has exploded the popular myth about Sikhs’ unfailing loyalty to the British crown and has tried to expose the British policies and loud professions of justice and fair-play. Conscious of their importance as a fighting race the Government eulogised the Sikhs with the epithet of ‘Right Arm India’ and their province as the ‘cradle of imperial services troops’ and often exaggerated their sense of loyalty and friendship. British policy with regard to the Sikhs reminds us

of Colonel Tod's *Annals of Rajsthan* in which he depicts the Rajputs as a brave race but with the same stroke of pen puts forward the theory of their 'foreign-origin'. Similarly, attempts were made to alienate the Sikhs from other communities in the Punjab and divisions were also created in their ranks by way of martial and non-martial, agriculturist and non-agriculturist classes and then by over-emphasising the role of caste and keeping alive the question of Jats and non-Jats. Any attempt at unification was looked with suspicion. The Government wanted the Sikhs, particularly those in the army, to remain away from 'unhealthy influences'. According to the author it was in the execution of this policy that special efforts were made to nip in the bud any religious or political movement which tended to create any difficulty in the way of Sikhs' recruitment. "That is why," emphasises the author, "every effort was made to keep the Punjab backward in all spheres -economic, religious, educational and social and to levy special taxes on them, offer them very low prices for their agricultural products and thereby forcing them to seek recruitment in the army. But this judgement of the author can not stand an impartial examination. Historically speaking, the Punjab was a much prosperous province economically compared to other provinces under the British rule. A net work of canals, roads, railways and then the coming into being of the Canal Colonies made it the granary of India. Whether these measures added to the material and moral happiness of the people or just helped win over the vested interests is another riddle of the British imperialism. The Punjab, of course, was backward politically as well as educationally. The Government was anxious to continue using the Sikhs as a 'Fighting Machine' and it was essential that they should have no independence of action, thought and belief. Hand books on Sikh religion were specially prepared for use by the Sikhs in the army in which songs of the blessings of the British rule were repeatedly sung and it was enjoined on the Sikhs that faithfully serving the government was a part of their *dharma*. Special attention was paid to win over the limited elite among the Sikhs by alluring them with high offices, *jagirs* and titles and, in turn, using them as tools for controlling the Sikh masses.

The writer has tried to bring out the deep-rooted interests of the Government in keeping the Sikh Gurdwaras under the control of the Mahants. Most of these custodians of the shrines had given up their traditional devotion to religion and pious life and had consequently lost the popularity and respect among the followers of the Sikh faith. They were, thus, mainly dependent on the goodwill and support of the local authorities for being in possession of the shrines. The Government could, therefore, easily use these abbots as tools to win over the sympathies and support of the Sikh masses and in condemning its political opponents. The instance of Arur Singh, Government-appointed Manager of the Durbar Sahib, Amritsar, is most glaring. When the whole Punjab, nay even whole of the country, was burning with a sense of revenge against the black deeds of General Dyer, he invited the General to the Durbar Sahib and whitewashed his blood-stains by offering him a *Saropao* and declaring him a 'Sikh'. This greatly scandalised the Sikh community. An urgent and strong need was felt to put to an end to the worn out system of Gurdwara management and with it the greed, licentiousness and black-deeds of the Mahants and their patrons. To undertake such a gigantic task the Sikh masses had to be prepared and the timely start of a Gurmukhi daily, the *Akali*, greatly helped create a climate for reform.

The stage was thus set for the coming struggle and the following years saw the Akalis vigorously launching *morchas* for the reform of their shrines. To begin with the work of reform was undertaken by individual Akali *Jathas* but then came to the fore the two great organisations of the Sikhs, (i) a representative body to control the Gurdwaras freed from the Mahants called the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and (ii) the Shiromani Akali Dal to co-ordinate the work of various Akali *Jathas*. Soon some of the very important Sikh Gurdwaras, including the



Golden Temple, the Akal Takhat, Tarn Taran, Panja Sahib, Guru-ka-Bagh and Nankana Sahib, came under the Panthic control though the Akalis had to pay a very heavy price for them.

Passing over of the Gurdwaras and their incomes to the SGPC greatly unnerved the Government because it felt that the funds would be utilised for educating the Sikh masses and the Gurdwaras and their managers could no longer be used to strengthen the hands of the British empire in India. The Government opposed any attempt at disturbing the *status quo* in the management of the Gurdwaras and as interpreter of law stood at the back of the Mahants and vested interests. In its effort to weaken the growing agitation of the Akalis it declared the SGPC and the Shiromani Akali Dal as unlawful associations by an order dated 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1923. This resulted in the change of the arena of struggle. Now onwards it became a two-pronged movement directed against the Mahants on the one hand and against the bureaucracy on the other.

The author has tried to portray the heroic role played by the Sikh masses who staked their all to win this religious war against the Mahants and their supporter, the Government. It is distressing indeed that such a heroic people after winning the freedom of their shrines lost something more important - the unity of organisation because of differences of opinion among the ranks of leadership over the working of the Gurdwara Act, release of prisoners and other issues.

On going through the statistics of the participants in the movement one finds that the bulk of the Akali volunteers came from the peasantry of the Punjab. But it will be too much to deduce from this that the Akali movement was a Peasants' movement. It is true that the peasantry of the Punjab greatly participated in this movement but this they did more in a spirit of service to the cause of the *Panth* (which even now is dearer to a common Sikh villager) than due to any conscious political motivation. Hence it cannot be called an organised peasants' movement.

This brings to the fore another important issue discussed by the author. Whether the Akali movement had any connections with the Peasants' movement in Russia or it drew any direct or indirect inspiration from the Russian Revolution, offers a challenge to the young researchers to take up the issue for historical treatment. A C.I.D. report (File No. 235/1926, Home-Poll., in the National Archives of India) mentions that Sikh boys were being sent to 'Ram Nagar' (the code word used for Tashkant) for military training and that Master Mota Singh and some other Babbar Akalis were in secret association with the revolutionaries in Russia. This evidence is confirmed in the writings and biographical works of some of the Sikh revolutionaries. After the failure of the Ghadr many of the Sikh revolutionaries in the U.S.A. and India went over to Russia and established contacts with the Communist International. And the fact that quite a few of the revolutionaries were actively participating in the Akali movement points out to the possible contact between the Russian Revolutionaries and the extremists in the Akali movement. There is a possibility that the twin-aspects of the Akali movement -(i) large-scale participation of the Sikh peasantry and (ii) struggle against imperialism - might have appealed to the Revolutionaries in Russia. On the other hand, the extremists among the Akalis might have drawn direct or indirect help or inspiration from the Russian Revolution. The author has made a reference to the letters which the leaders of the Peasants movement in Russia addressed to the Akali leaders and their newspaper - *Akali-te-Pardesi*. But the whereabouts and the contents of these letters have yet to see the light of the day.

While discussing the issue of the 'abdication' of the Maharaja of Nabha the author has tried to expose the British stand that his abdication was voluntary but has not answered some of the important questions on the issue. Why the Akalis took up the case of the Maharaja, how was his

abdication a religious issue and to what extent the SGPC was competent to take up the cause of the Maharaja, are some of the important questions which need more probe and historical treatment.

Though the author claims in the preface that he has tried to be objective but a perusal of the book shows that he has not been able to fight the overflowing bias which has dominated his judgement. This, perhaps, he could not help as he himself was an actor in this great drama of historical forces. One finds instances of extreme criticism, bordering on ridicule, of the people opposed to his way of thinking. In his overflowing contempt for some of the Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders, the author has failed to appreciate the contribution which the Singh Sabhas and the Diwan made towards Sikh awakening. Though there is no denying that during the Akali movement these bodies changed their loyalties to the Government side and sometimes even compromised with the Government at the cost of the Akalis, yet to deny them their due is, I feel, doing injustice to the cause of historical writing. The writer has taken 'facts' and has in most of the cases served them in a spicy manner. A historian would have served them plain.

In the end, the author has discussed some of the important findings of his work and has attempted to give this much-neglected phase of Punjab's struggle against imperialism its rightful place in the front line of forces of Indian nationalism. For this he deserves our grateful thanks. Let this work by Sardar Sohan Singh Josh be a beginning in the direction of bringing to light this important chapter of the history of modern Punjab. The author has offered to the students of history working on the Punjab a challenge by suggesting a number of aspects of this movement for historical treatment. Let us hope they will come forward to accept it.

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MOHINDER SINGH

*AKALI MORCHIAN DĀ ITIHĀS* by *Sohan Singh Josh*, Pub. Navyug Publishers. Delhi 1972, pp. 530, Price Rs. 20/-

The book under review is a detailed study of the Akali *Morchas* that were launched from 1919 to 1926 for the emancipation of the Sikh shrines from under the control of depraved *Mahants*. The income of some of the Gurdwaras ran into lacs and it was misused for ignoble purposes by the corrupt custodians who were in occupation of these places. The chiefs of the Sikh Misals and Maharaja Ranjit Singh had assigned sizeable estates to the Sikh temples. These shrines continued to be looked after by the *Udāsīs* for a long time and the charge passed from father to son or from *Guru* to *Chelā* as hereditary property. The Singh Sabha Movement, a revivalist one, aimed at replacing the control of the undesirable Udasi Mahants by that of the devoted Sikhs.

Almost everywhere the *Mahants* equipped themselves to resist the attempts of the Akalis to oust them. At Nankana Sahib the Udasi Mahant Narayan Das did to death the whole of the unarmed and peaceful *Jathā* of 130 people who were all burnt before the police came. This massacre inflamed the whole of the Sikh community. A little later the keys of the treasury of the Golden Temple were taken away by the European Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar. The Sikhs had to launch an agitation to get them back. Similarly the Sikhs asserted their right to cutting fuel-wood from the Gurdwara land attached to Guru-ka-Bagh, a shrine about 13 miles from Amritsar. Thousands of Akalis were arrested and hundreds of the injured *Satyagrahis* were hospitalised.

Ultimately their rights to cutting wood was accepted as against the objection of the Guru-ka-Bagh *Mahant*.

In 1923 the Sikhs tried to observe 'Nabha Day' to protest against the dethronement of Maharaja Ripudiman Singh, the ruler of Nabha State, who supported the Akalis in their struggle for Gurdwara reform. The British administrator at Nabha, appointed after the deposition of the Maharaja, tried to prevent the Sikh *Jathās* from entering Jaito where they sustained serious injuries. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and his companions also courted arrests there. All these *Morchās* and the opposition of the Government forged unity among the ranks of the Sikhs and consequently they emerged triumphant against the government repression.

The Akali movement, because of the tenacity of its purpose and through the help of the press, attracted the attention of the people of England, America, Canada, Shanghai and Singapore. Those countries rendered moral support to this movement. The role of the Sikh intelligentsia during this period has been highly commendable. The people who came forward to undergo physical hardships and privations and to lose their jobs and properties, included professors, lawyers, school teachers, businessmen and government pensioners.

The author Sohan Singh 'Josh', a veteran freedom-fighter, had been directly or indirectly associated with the various *Morchas* or campaigns of the Akalis. As such, most of the information provided in this book carries the stamp of first hand and personal knowledge of the author regarding the struggle of the Akalis. He knew intimately many of the persons who played the major role in the struggle. He closely studied the plans of the Akalis and the designs and the strategy of the government to deal with them. But his analysis of the situation is not always sound, rather smacks his strong prejudices which unremittingly have an impress on this study. He is particularly prejudiced against the Chief Khalsa Diwan, certain British officers and also some well meaning important leaders of the Sikhs. He never feels inclined to appreciate any of their good or useful contributions to the Akali movement. In season and out of season, he is on the look out for an opportunity to malign and condemns them. The author lacks the quality of respecting the opponent's point of view. A historian must always be open to conviction and far from being rigid and inflexible in his approach to political, economic or social problems. He should look at them dispassionately. He must be balanced and should dissociate himself from the situations that involve the individuals or the parties or the nations. But here is an author, handling the history of an important movement in the Punjab, who is more of a pleader of his own party than a researcher trying to sift out the truth and arriving at the correct evaluation of a situation. He knows his own party's point of view which he advocates and does not look at the situation either from the stand point of the government or that of a historian who is required to be an impersonal and impartial judge of things. In his account of the various *Morchas* the Akalis have been presented as the crusaders and British officers as heartless *Kafirs* inspired with a deep spirit of revenge, cruelty and injustice.

Mr. 'Josh' is correct in his estimate that the Gurdwara Reform Movement was a great peaceful agitation in India history and it convinced the people of the country that a non-violent *satyagraha* was an effective and a powerful weapon that could successfully defeat the mighty bureaucracy. Despite the best efforts of the diplomatic and shrewd British officers their designs to foil the various *Morchas* proved abortive. The treatment that the captured and imprisoned Sikhs received at the hands of the British Indian government convinced the Sikhs, as the author feels, that it was shameful to live in the servility of the foreign rulers. The participation of the Sikhs in the

Akali movement prepared them for a bigger struggle for their country's liberation from the foreign yoke.

At places, in order to create wide and emotional impression, the narration of a historical incident is reduced to a charming or fascinating story which seems more of fiction and less of history.

The *Akālī Morchiān dā Itihās* is certainly a mine of information regarding the *Morchās* that the author undertook to write about. He had added a chapter on the literature produced as a result of this movement. This literature gives a peep into the sentiments and feelings of the people in respect of their claims over their Gurdwaras. The author has also given a brief but useful account of those persons who were in the vanguard of the movement. He has also given details of the punishments suffered by various people in the form of fines, imprisonments, deaths, forfeiture of property, etc., etc.

The book is written in chaste Punjabi but the author makes frequent use of colloquial expressions. At places the tone of the writer against those who do not belong to his party or who happen to disagree with his views is unnecessarily harsh and biting. Much against his professions in the preface that his conclusions would be based on his findings from the various records, his strong affiliations to certain views definitely have stood in his way and have prevented him from moderating his conclusions.

All things said the 'Akālī Morchiān dā Itihās' is an important contribution to the history of the Punjab. Mr. Sohan Singh 'Josh' has produced this informative work after consulting the various government records relating to the Akali movement and it is an interesting study both for the general reader and the researcher.

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BHAGAT SINGH

## CHRONOLOGY

1643, Dec.	Hafiz Adam died at Medina.
1658	Emperor Aurangzeb's accession to power.
1664-5	Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeded to Guru-ship.
1666, Dec. 22	Guru Gobind Singh born.
1667, Dec. 27	Raja Ram Singh received emperor's order to proceed to Assam.
1669, Feb.	Ram Singh arrived at Rangamati.
1707, June 8	Battle of Jajau.
1707, July 23	Bahadur Shah receives Guru Gobind Singh at Agra.
1710, Dec. 10	Bahadur Shah issued edicts to his faujdars for general massacre of Sikhs.
1712	Death of Bahadur Shah at Lahore.
1772, May 22	Raja Ram Mohan Roy born.
1783	Baba Dayal born at Peshawar.
1808, March	Baba Dayal shifted from Peshawar to Bhera.
1816, Feb. 3	Baba Ram Singh born at Bhaini.
1824	Mul Sankra (Swami Dayananda) born.
1828	Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
1829	An Act passed declaring <i>Sati</i> unlawful.
1831, April 8	Raja Ram Mohan Roy went to England as representative of Mughal Emperor Akbar II.
1833, Sept. 27	Raja Ram Mohan Roy died in Stapleton.
1834	A Presbyterian Minister John Lowrie arrived in India from America.
1834, Oct. 9	John Lowrie landed at Cawnpore.
1834, Nov. 15	John Lowrie arrived at Ludhiana.
1835	Chet Ram born.
1838	Dwarka Nath Tagore visited England.
1838, Nov. 19	Keshav Chandra Sen born at Calcutta.
1839	Mirza Ghulam Ahmad born at Qadian.
-	Devendra Nath established the <i>Tat-Bodhini-Sabha</i> .
1841	Baba Ram Singh met Baba Balak Singh at Hazro.
1842	Devendra Nath Tagore joined the Brahmo Samaj.
1844	Death of Dwarka Dass.
1845-46	Baba Ram Singh left army.
1850, Dec. 20	Shiv Narayan Agnihotri born.
1852	T.H. Fitzpatrick and Robert dark, the first Missionaries of the Church of England, appointed to the Punjab, arrived in Amritsar.
-	Daud Singh embraced Christianity.
1854	Gurmukhi Grammar prepared by John Newton and the Gurmukhi Punjabi Dictionary prepared by him in collaboration with the Rev. Levi Janvier.
1855, Jan. 30	Baba Dayal died and Darbara Singh succeeded him.
1855	United Presbyterian Mission started work at Sialkot.
1856, December	The first girls school opened in Rawalpindi by Mrs. Browne, Inspectress of Schools.
1857	Keshav Chandra Sen joined Brahmo Samaj.
-	Indian Sepoy Mutiny.
-	<i>Hukam Nama</i> by Darbara Singh.

- July 7	Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Hunter and their child killed by mutineers at Sialkot.
1859	Bhai Jawahir Singh born in Amritsar.
1860	Mul Sankra Swami met Virajanand.
-	The <i>Sangat Sabha</i> founded by Keshav Chandra Sen.
1861	Baba Darbara Singh visited Amritsar.
-	Anand Marriage in Amritsar performed by Bhai Boota Singh.
1862	Keshav Chandra Sen appointed Acharya of Brahmo Samaj.
-	Mission house been built at Kapurthala.
1863	Keshav Chandra Sen founded <i>Brahmo Bandhu Society</i> .
- April 11	Baba Ram Singh visited Amritsar.
1863, June 28	Baba Ram Singh interned in his village Bhaini.
1864, March 24	Rev. Levi Janvier was killed by a Sikh Faqir.
- April 17	Rev. Isador Loewen was shot by his watchman, a Mazhabi Sikh.
1865	Kapurthala Mission closed.
1866, Nov. 11	Keshav Chandra Sen established <i>Visbal Society</i> or the <i>Bharati Brahmo Samaj</i> .
1867	Restrictions imposed on Baba Ram Singh lifted.
1869	Some Kukas joined Dogra Regiment in Jammu.
1870	Rattan Chand (Sahib Ratta) succeeded Darbara Singh.
-	Some Kukas attacked butchers at Amritsar.
-	Keshav Chandra Sen went to England.
1871	Jammu ruler disbanded Kuka contingent.
- July 15	Kukas attacked slaughter house at Raikot (Ludhiana).
1872, Jan. 11	Kukas met at Bhaini to celebrate Lohari Festival.
- Jan. 15	Malerkotia butchers attacked by Kukas.
- Jan. 17-18	65 Kukas blown away from guns.
1873	4 Sikh students of Amritsar Mission School proclaimed their intention of becoming Christians.
1873	Shiv Narayan Agnihotri joined Brahmo Samaj.
1873	First Singh Sabha founded at Amritsar.
-	Shiv Narayan Agnihotri came to Lahore.
- Dushera	Inaugural meeting of Singh Sabha, Amritsar, held.
1874	<i>Satyarth Prakash</i> -published in 1875.
-	Dayananda visited Bombay.
1875	Arya Samaj established at Bombay.
-	Shiv Narayan Agnihotri started two Journals.
1877, Jan. 1	Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India at Delhi.
-	Punjabi classes started in Oriental College, Lahore.
1879, Jan.	The Theosophist leaders (Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky) came to India.
- Nov. 2	Singh Sabha established at Lahore.
1880, Jan. 25	A new Brahmo Samaj established by Keshav Chandra Sen.
1882	Dayananda founded Gau-rakshini Sabha.
1884, Jan. 8	Keshav Chandra Sen died.
- Nov. 29	Baba Ram Singh died in Rangoon.
1886	Formation of Khalsa Diwan at Lahore.
-April	Khalsa Diwan, Lahore, expelled Bhai Nihal Singh.
1886	Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College started in Lahore.
- Feb. 16	Dev Samaj founded by Shiv Narayan Agnihotri.
1888, Nov. 25	11 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Arya Samaj, Lahore.

- Dec. 2	Bhai Jawahir Singh and others protested against the attitude of the Arya Samaj.
1889, Sep. 3	Sadhu Sunder Singh born at Rampur, Ludhiana.
1891	Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri published a pamphlet <i>Pandit Dayananda Unveiled</i> .
1892	Some Aryas brought a law-suit against a Hindu who wrote against 'niyoga' but the case was dismissed.
-	Khalsa College established at Amritsar.
-	The Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, Ferozepur, established.
-Feb. 16	At 6th Anniversary of Dev Samaj, Dev Atma declared himself as <i>Saviour</i> .
1892, Feb. 19	The constitution of Lahore Singh Sabha was registered.
- March 5	Sir J. Lyall laid the foundation stone of the main building of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.
-	Anand Marriage in Lahore of Jawahir Singh's daughter.
1893, Oct.	Khalsa College, Amritsar began as a Middle School.
- Oct. 22	Maharaja Duleep Singh died.
1894	Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, established.
1896	Sir Attar Singh died.
1898	Bhai Gurmukh Singh died of heart failure.
1902	New constitution of the Singh Sabha framed.
1905	Devendra Nath Tagore died.
1906	Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, started a Panjabi Magazine, the <i>Dukh Nivaran</i> .
- May 17	Bhai Hari Singh Kuka died, succeeded by his son Baba Partap Singh.
1908	Parcharak Vidyalaya (Missionary College) was started at Tam Taran.
- Jan.	Sikh Educational Committee Chief Khalsa Diwan, established.
1909	Anand Marriage Act passed.
1910, May 14	Bhai Jawahir Singh died.
1919	Formation of Sikh League, first session was held at Amritsar along with the congress.
1920, Oct. 12	A committee of 125 elected to manage the Sikh Gurdwara registered on 30 <sup>th</sup> April, 1921.
1921, Jan. 25	The priests of Tam Taran attacked an Akali <i>Jatha</i> .
- Feb. 20	A <i>Jatha</i> of Akalis massacred at Nankana Sahib.
- Nov. 7	The D.C. of Amritsar, took over the keys of Golden Temple.
1922	Restrictions on the Kukas removed.
-	<i>Kar Sewa</i> of Darbar Sahib Tank of Amritsar started.
- Jan. 19	The keys of Golden Temple returned.
1923, July 9	Abdication of Maharaja of Nabha.
1925, Nov. 1	Second Gurdwara Act came into force.

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